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ANNA,

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A WELCH HEIRESS.

BRITISH MUSEUM
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By MRS. BENNETT,

AUTHOR OF

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&c. &c.

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CHAPTER I.

A Scene of Mortality.

THE latter end of September, Mrs. Clarke, a widow woman, whoſe narrow circumſtances obliged her to let lodgings, was ſo fortunate (as ſhe then termed it) to have her apartments taken at her own price by a very good-looking middle-aged man; who, to obviate any doubts that ſhe might have reſpecting his being a ſtranger, advanced a month's rent, and, preparing her to receive a ſick woman and a child, deſired her to provide a nurſe for the former, as ſhe engaged to ſuperintend

all the attendance he wiſhed for himſelf and the latter: and, having given her a couple of guineas to lay out in what neceſſaries might be immediately wanting, left her to fetch the woman and child.

The ſtranger had dropped no hint that the perſon, who was to occupy the apartments, was his wife, neither had he ſaid ſhe was not ſo.—Mrs. Clarke was ſcrupulous and particular in her own principles; but her lodgings were empty; they had, unluckily, been ſo all the ſummer; the winter was approaching; during that ſeaſon ſhe had ſeldom tenants for them, and neceſſity rendered her leſs inquiſitive than, in more eaſy circumſtances, ſhe would have been; ſhe was prevented aſking queſtions, by the fear of having them anſwered in a way that would oblige her to forego an advantage ſhe could not well do without.

In two hours, from the time he left her, a hackney-coach ſet down at her door an elderly woman in the laſt ſtage of a conſumption, a pretty little girl of three or four years old, a portmanteau, a ſmall trunk,

trunk, and the aforeſaid gentleman. Luckily, Mrs. Clarke was a woman who made a point of fulfilling her engagements; for, the aſſiduity, with which ſhe had prepared their rooms and procured a nurſe, was rendered neceſſary by the extreme weakneſs of the poor invalid, who was directly got to bed, and a neighbouring apothecary ſummoned to her aſſiſtance.

The gentleman, with apparent concern, waited his deciſion; and, on a Phyſician's being recommended, begged (being, as he ſaid, a ſtranger) the apothecary would give him the addreſs of the moſt eminent; adding, that he would go himſelf to procure his immediate attendance. As ſoon as he was furniſhed with directions, he ſet off, in haſte, accompanied by the apothecary, and Mrs. Clarke was beginning to ſcrape acquaintance with her little charge, when her attention was called to a buſtle at her door, where ſhe met, to her ſurpriſe and concern, Mr. Linton, the apothecary, returning, aſſiſted by ſome accidental paſſengers, with the lifeleſs body of her new lodger: a vein

was immediately opened, but without effect: a fit of apoplexy had put a period to his exiſtence, and he breathed no more.

The confuſion, ſuch an event raiſed in the houſe, reached the ſick perſon; and, the nurſe incautiouſly telling her the cauſe, it threw her into faintings, from which ſhe never recovered ſufficiently to ſpeak to be underſtood, although ſhe lived three days.

Among others, whoſe curioſity was excited by this awful and fatal circumſtance, was the Rev. John Dalton, a popular preacher, belonging to a methodiſt conventicle in the neighbourhood.—Mrs. Clarke, as well as the nurſe, were his conſtant hearers, and begged his prayers with the dying woman, who, a ſhort time before ſhe expired, gave proofs ſhe was ſenſible of his ſacred function and her own ſituation, by making ſigns to have the infant and trunk brought her, both which ſhe put into his hands, and, appearing then more compoſed and reſigned, was, in a few moments, releaſed out of her pain.

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The trunk appeared heavy enough to quiet, in ſome meaſure, the apprehenſions of the reverend teacher; otherwiſe, the ſacred bequeſt, and the ſolemn manner in which it was made, would not have been the moſt acceptable thing in the world to him.—Poor Mrs. Clarke, as ſoon as ſhe found ſhe could not diſturb the dying woman, began loudly to lament herſelf at having a couple of people to bury, of whoſe names, connections, and even country, ſhe was ignorant, and whoſe baggage was too trifling to anſwer the funeral expences, which would half ruin her to defray, having a very ſmall penſion, as widow of a carpenter of a man of war, and what ſhe could make of her lodgings, to ſupport herſelf and daughter, whom ſhe had put apprentice to a millener.

This reflection ſuggeſted the idea of ſearching the pockets of both the deceaſed; in the man's was found a gold watch and chain with three ſeals, viz. a coat of arms, a creſt, and a cipher, (H. T.) ſeven guineas, ſome ſilver, and a ſmall key, which Dalton

took, as belonging to the trunk; and, having half opened it, he ſhut it again immediately, declaring it was full of old papers, which he would look over when he got home, and, as it had pleaſed the Lord thus ſignally to deprive the innocent child of its natural friends, he would take the preſent care of her himſelf.

To be ſure, he had a large family of his own, and hard enough he found it to ſupport them; but what of that? Deeds of charity, like thoſe of virtue, were their own reward; nay, he would go farther, he would take what effects there were, and pay all the expences of their reſpective funerals, and every other that was already incurred: if there were enough to reimburſe him it would be well; if not, God would pay him.—The women were loſt in admiration of his piety and charity; when, to avoid the cenſures of evil-minded people, he directed them to take an inventory of the things, the property of the defunct: a prudent precaution, though not abſolutely neceſſary, for the witneſſes

witneſſes were well acquainted, from memory, with every particular, but that which he ſaid required none, viz. the ſmall trunk, which he ſuffered not to go out of his own hands.

Having given what farther directions he thought proper, a coach was ordered, in which he conveyed the child, the trunk, and himſelf, to his own habitation.

When Mr. Dalton ſaid he had a large family of his own, he had (which was not always the caſe) ſpoken the truth; having a fat, handſome, wife, five daughters, and two ſons, with a ſmall income; ſo that, when he got home, Mrs. Dalton was not over ſenſible of the neceſſity there was for this extraordinary exertion of a charitable diſpoſition in her huſband. To ſay the truth, though nobody could preach it better, or enforce it with ſtronger argument, there was very little of that meek-eyed virtue in the doctor's (as he was called) practice. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at, that Mrs. Dalton was both angry and ſurpriſed at this firſt inſtance of that amiable virtue.

He ſoon, however, contrived to reconcile her to the trouble and expence of this little addition to her family; and when, after communing with her huſband, ſhe looked at the ſweet babe, then aſleep, it was ſo lovely, and had ſomething ſo genteel, ſo much above the common run of children, about it, not to feel for its diſtreſs was impoſſible; ſhe had children of her own, and God knew how ſoon ſhe might be taken from them, ſhe would, therefore, certainly be a mother to the dear innocent.—It was, accordingly, put to bed, after which Mr. Dalton and his rib, whether from the conſciouſneſs of a right act, or from any other pleaſing occurrence of the day, ſpent the remainder of the evening in high good humour with each other, adding to their uſual draught of porter a baſon of warm punch, and retired to reſt with better ſpirits than they had ever before done.

The next morning our little heroine was introduced, in a very engaging light, to her new acquaintance; ſhe had been long immured, without room to exerciſe, or play-

fellows

fellows to amuſe her. Dalton's children were three of them of an age to be her companions, and they had a large garden to range in: delighted with ſuch a pleaſing change ſhe prattled and careſſed them by turns, exhibiting, in her lively ſallies, great good humour, and viſible traces of having received her firſt impreſſions in genteel life.

Unconſcious of the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained, and intoxicated with the dolls and toys (though not very coſtly ones) which the Dalton's poſſeſſed, ſhe thought of nothing elſe till bed-time; then a hearty cry after papa and nurſe for ſome time rendered her fretful, but ſleep ſoon ſilenced her little ſorrow: for ſome days, bed-time was her hour of affliction; but, that wearing off by degrees, all memory of the paſt was loſt, nor could they, by any exertion in their power, draw from her the ſurname of her parents; her own, ſhe told them, was Anna; if ſhe wanted any thing, it was "give it Anna," or "let Anna have it," but, her ideas were ſo infantine, they could learn nothing from her innocent talk that

could lead to any diſcovery of where ſhe came from or whom ſhe belonged to. As ſhe never mentioned a mother, they concluded the woman who died to be her nurſe, and the man her father, both of whom were decently interred; and, in a week after, an advertiſement was inſerted in *one* morning paper, by Mr. Dalton, in the following terms:

" *Whereas, on the 29th day of Septem-*
" *ber, a man and woman took a lodging*
" *in the Hampſtead road, where the man*
" *died of an apoplectic fit the ſame day,*
" *and the woman of the fright occaſioned*
" *by it, leaving a female child: whoever*
" *are related to the ſaid man or woman,*
" *and will take the child away, may apply*
" *to the Rev. John Dalton, Tottenham-*
" *court-road.*"

My reader may, perhaps, conceive the contents of the trunk might have put the parſon in a ſurer method of finding whom the orphan belonged to, but in that he would be deceived, for it contained no ſort of information of the kind, or, indeed, any other

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but what he fully reſolved to conceal with the moſt guarded ſecreſy, and that was the exact ſum of fourteen hundred guineas, in fourteen ſmall canvaſs bags, all marked 100 alike, ſave that, in one, beſides the money, were three valuable diamond rings, and a lock of hair folded up in lawn paper, with "My "ever-dear Anna's, H. T." written upon it.

I wiſh I could, with truth, ſay theſe things were concealed with a laudable intention of reſtoring them, or that his inquiries after the child's original were made with that earneſtneſs it would have been had thoſe valuables not been in Dalton's poſſeſſion.—But I fear the reverſe will be proved! the temptation was ſtrong, the tempted weak! avarice is a dangerous, it is an encroaching, vice!—— Dalton had not any immediate intention of converting to his own uſe the money; but, when once the glittering bait was ſecure in his poſſeſſion, and no witneſs or perſon to demand it but an innocent child, (who could not now poſſibly want it,) he overcame the difficulty of being juſt, when juſtice would have deprived him of fourteen hundred

guineas; and, arguments being ready to corroborate partial ideas, this pair perſuaded themſelves, in retaining money they could, at any time, reſtore, they were not injuring any other perſon, while they were materially benefiting their own family.

CHAPTER II.

A Methodiſt Preacher.

MR. John Dalton, whom I have introduced ſo early to my readers, will cut ſo conſiderable a figure in the ſucceeding pages, that I think it neceſſary they ſhould know ſomething of the perſon with whom they are likely to be more intimately acquainted.

He was the ſon of a journeyman carpenter, in a large town in South Wales, and,

and, being a boy of an active turn, was admitted into a free grammar-ſchool by the preceptor, for the double purpoſe of cleaning his ſhoes and ſweeping the ſchool-room: here he picked up a ſmattering of dead languages, and, by a ſervile attention to the ſon of a dignified clergyman, afterwards biſhop of the dioceſs, got ſo much into his good graces, that, by his means, he was, to the ſurpriſe of every body who knew him, ordained.

A late celebrated methodiſt teacher, was it is known, fond of procuring men, for his miſſion, who were in orders; and Dalton, conſidering, perhaps, a prophet has no honour in his own country, where indeed, he had not the leaſt proſpect of even a cure, pleaded a call of the ſpirit, and, inliſting under his banner, was ordered to a town in the weſt of England; there he ſucceeded ſo well as to get a good livelihood, and ſo ingratiated himſelf into the favour of a widow of good circumſtances, that, after various conſiderations, ſhe waved her firſt intentions, of taking the good man

for

for her bodily, as well as ſpiritual, guide, in favour of her daughter, a pretty, innocent, girl of ſixteen, with a thouſand pounds left by her father; indeed, ſome people affirm, that the old lady's having her income during her widowhood only was the reaſon the doctor did ſuch violence to his ſpiritual feelings as to accept for his helpmate, a young creature, who had not yet profeſſed the religion of which he was ſo fervent a ſupporter, when it was well known he might have contracted himſelf to a holy matron, whoſe mornings, evenings, and even midnights, were often devoted to the pious ſervice of the church.

But, whatever were his inducements, the ſimple fact was as I have related it: he married the young woman with the approbation of her mother. He was not, however, equally fortunate with the few inhabitants of the place, who did not profeſs methodiſm, and who choſe to teſtify their diſlike of the old lady's diſpoſal of her handſome daughter, by taking ſome liberties with her houſe and windows not quite within

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the letter of the law. Nor were they more ceremonious with the doctor, who had the mortification of ſeeing the tabernacle demoliſhed, and of being obliged to quit, under cover of the night, his friends and fellow-ſufferers.

A thouſand pounds in his pocket, and a handſome wife in his hand, were not ſins of ſo crying a nature in the eyes of his chief in London as they had been in thoſe of the ignorant weſt-country folks. He found himſelf not worſe received for the perſecution he had undergone, and had ſoon reaſon to rejoice at an event which eſtabliſhed him in one of the firſt meetings in London.

Here, then, the powers of Dalton had their full ſcope.—To ſtrong voice, a primitive look, a lank thin perſon, and a large wig, he added the cunning and cant of an itinerant preacher; and, with thoſe qualifications, he ſoon became the favourite of all the old women and maids who frequented his conventicle.—His wife, ignorant and uninformed, caught the prejudices, as well as manners,

manners, of thoſe ſhe aſſociated with: ſhe thought her huſband the very ſaint he profeſſed himſelf, bred every year, grew fat and indolent, deſpiſing with her lips the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, whilſt a gay gown or a ſmart cap could, at any time, ſteal her attention from her prayers; and the joy of her heart was good eating and drinking; in this ſhe was very often indulged by the continual entertainments to which they were invited by the diſciples of her huſband.

She was a good mother, a faithful wife, and, conſidering the company ſhe kept, a ſincere friend: harmleſs and inoffenſive by nature, ſhe was taught to believe it meritorious, if her right cheek was ſmitten by her huſband to turn to him her left alſo: his will was the law of her actions; and, as his darling purſuit was money, and his conſtant theme to her the diſtreſs ſhe and her family would be expoſed to if he died before her, ſhe imperceptibly imbibed an avaricious turn, conformable to his diſpoſition but not her own.

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The thouſand pounds, her fortune, had been no otherwiſe changed than in the transfer from the name of her guardians to his; and moſt years he contrived, what with collections and preſents, to make both ends meet without touching the intereſt.

Indeed his talents and induſtry were mutually calculated to make the moſt of every poſſible advantage that offered; and, while his hearers fancied they were forwarding their own ſalvation by their liberality to the preacher, he was moſt aſſiduouſly lying in wait for every avenue to their conſciences that could be turned to his own intereſt. ——If a tailor were ſeized with a devout fit, he was ſoon given to underſtand what a diſgrace to the congregation it was to ſee their miniſter in ſo ſhabby a coat; did a hoſier invite him to dinner, ten to one but the reverend viſitor had holes viſibly coaxed in his ſtockings; and a linen-draper was ſure to ſee him in a dirty ſhirt, becauſe his ſtock was too ſmall to laſt round a week's waſh; then his large family was a conſtant topic, and his ſmall income ever

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in high lamentation againſt quarter-day. Many and various were the ſhifts and inventions of this good man to lay his flock under contribution, in which he was ſo ſucceſsful, that he has been known to be ſelling in one part of the town what he had begged in the other; conſtantly ſaying, "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the "Lord!"

But, notwithſtanding ſo divine a tenet, which was continually on his lips, nothing could be farther from his heart than the idea that preaching and practice ſhould go together. At the time our little heroine was thrown in his way, he was wavering between two points, each of them leading to the grand concern of his life—*money*.

A builder, who had taken a large ſpace of ground, where he had engaged to erect ſeveral houſes, had laid the foundation of a chapel, which he offered to Dalton on conſideration of his advancing one thouſand pounds towards finiſhing it, and to ſhare the profits between them.

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The plan was flattering, and the harveſt, if it ſucceeded, immenſe.—He calculated the number it would hold, the price of the tickets for the different pews, with the profits of the burials and the viſitations, and his heart bounded at the ſum it would produce. On the other hand, if it ſhould not ſucceed, what would become of his thouſand pounds ſunk in the building, where both principal and intereſt would be loſt?

In ſuch a dilemma any prudent man would be cautious, but Dalton was miſerable.—Elated with the hope of obtaining riches, he no ſooner reſolved on the partnerſhip, than the fear of parting with his money rent his very ſoul, and, under the dominion of that fear, the inſtant he determined to keep it in ſafety where it was, the chapel, finiſhed, conſecrated, and filled, preſented itſelf, with all its profits and emoluments, to his tortured imagination.

At this critical period, chance, which he miſnamed Providence, put it in his power to gratify his wiſhes, and preſerve, untouched, his own property; one only difficulty ſtarted,

ſtarted, ſhould the child be owned and the money claimed:—well, if either ſhould happen, how could it be proved he had them? The perſon who had intruſted them to him was no longer capaple of giving poſitive evidence, and the glorious uncertainty of the law admitted not, in pecuniary matters, of a circumſtantial one: he could not then be obliged to pay the money till quite convenient to himſelf; and, when it was, he aſſured his wife he would refund it without being obliged: this point being ſettled, the money was advanced to the builder, viz. one thouſand pounds, the remainder put into the Bank, and Dalton left happy in the accompliſhment of more than he had dared to wiſh for.

CHAP.

CHAPTER III.

The Methodiſt continued.

DALTON had many reaſons for enjoining ſecrecy to the builder; and, in order to be out of the way of impertinent inquirers, (one of which was Mrs. Clarke, who felt herſelf ſo much intereſted in the fate of our orphan, that ſhe let not a day paſs without viſiting her, nor ever went but with ſome little purchaſe of cakes, fruits, or toys,) he reſolved to move his reſidence, as the keeping alive the remembrance of the event, that had been in its conſequences ſo pleaſing to him, was, of all things, what he leaſt deſired.

Mrs. Clarke he could not affront, for ſhe had more claims than one on his civility; poor and neceſſitous as were her circumſtances, ſhe was always very liberal to him;

him; and, whenever her purſe would afford a bit of any thing better than common, it was ſhared with Mrs. Dalton.

Although a religious woman, ſhe was far from bing offenſively ſtrict in her actions or converſation; and ſo certain was Dalton of the integrity of her diſpoſition, that he ventured to indulge himſelf at her houſe in a luxury he could not, for fear of diſcovery, enjoy at his own. All his prayers and ſelf-denials had not been able to conquer a love which he, in his early days, had imbibed for a game of whiſt, it had been endeared to him when a ſchool-boy by ſupplying his pocket, and, as he had played with tolerable ſucceſs, the picking up of a few pence rendered it ſtill a deſirable amuſement: for this gratification, he relaxed a little with his ſtaunch friend, Mrs. Clarke, who, conceiving no ſin in playing a game of cards, was the readier to acquit him of any. Harmleſs as it was, he was in continual dread of diſcovery; and all his views now centering in the dear chapel, he reſolved to move near it, and, by that means,

drop

drop his friend, and be on the ſpot, an eye-witneſs to the rapidity of its improvements.

An inducement to this ſtep ſoon after occurred, as unwelcome as unexpected. Cautious as he had been in the chapel-ſcheme, it ſomehow or other tranſpired, and reached the ears of his employer, whoſe good will towards his deputies, ſo far from following the proſperous only, always decreaſed as they roſe in the eſtimation of their reſpective congregations.

He had ſeen with the eye of jealouſy the crowds that attended Dalton's meeting, and, dreading the growing popularity of a rival, ſo eligibly ſituated as the new chapel promiſed, contrived to pick a religious quarrel with our adventurer; and, having proved before a ſelect veſtry, that the reverend John Dalton had rendered himſelf unworthy of the rank he held in their ſect, by profanely playing three games at cards in the houſe of Martha Clarke, he was diſmiſſed the ſociety in diſgrace; and this ſentence was read publicly in all the devout

vout aſſemblies in the kingdom, as well as that of his aſſociate, Mrs. Clarke, who, to her infinite ſorrow, was excommunicated.

This terrible blow was followed by one much more ſo.—The builder, to whom he advanced the thouſand pounds, decamped, without performing any part of his contract, leaving the chapel unfiniſhed, and, what was ſtill worſe, without giving the poor parſon a clear title to the premiſes, thereby putting it out of his power (had he been ſo inclined) to employ another perſon to complete what the firſt had ſo inauſpiciouſly begun.

It has been ſaid, if, in the worſt of misfortunes, we were to ſeek conſolation from reaſon we ſhould feel a relief, in ſome ſhape or other, from the very evil that afflicts us.—Thus Mr. Dalton, and conſequently his wife, found comfort in reflecting it was not their own money they had loſt; they were yet four hundred guineas in pocket: nor was this all, for a jolly good-humoured clergyman of the Church of England, more benevolent than ſtrict, and more compaſ-

ſionate

ſionate than pious, hearing of Dalton's miſfortune, and that he had a very large family, who were involved in their father's diſtreſs, after ſome few inquiries into his morals and capability, engaged him as his curate, in a populous part of the town, at a ſettled ſalary of ſixty pounds per annum, and ſent his eldeſt boy to Chriſt's Hoſpital.

This event was conſidered by the Daltons as the greateſt piece of good fortune; and, as they were now to move in a more eligible ſphere, a hundred pounds more were expended in furniture, clothes, and other neceſſaries, ſo that the traces of the poor methodiſt parſon were no longer ſeen in their appearance.

He was then treated with more reſpect by the world in general; and as he kept to the kind of preaching he was accuſtomed to, it brought a full congregation to the church where he officiated. His deficiency in point of learning and abilities appeared to be made up by his religious zeal, and recommended him to the pariſhioners, to whom he pleaded his poverty, and a large

family, in a genteeler ſtyle, but with the ſame ſucceſs he had before done among the more ſcrupulous ſect from whom he had been diſcharged with ſuch marks of holy abhorrence.

CHAPTER IV.

An Accident.

WHEN Mrs Dalton was ſettled in her new habitation, her intended inquiries after a ſchool for her daughters were anticipated by the ſight of a large board, ſignifying in gilt letters, over the ſide-door of a chandler's ſhop, that "*Yong ladeys were hedi-*"*cated here;* with a "N. B. *dancing* "*tout*;" and the Miſs Daltons being now unqueſtionably young ladies, they, together with Anna, were ſent to this ſeminary of education,

ducation, which conſiſted in ſpelling badly words of two ſyllables, with needlework in proportion: as to dancing it was neither agreeable to Dalton's profeſſions or ſuitable to his finances to have his children learn it, though Anna was continually holding out her frock and making court'ſies to tempt him. Her lively genius gave early ſpecimens of what it was capable of, compaſſing what learning the ſchool afforded with incredible rapidity: ever firſt at book and work, ſhe was likewiſe firſt at play: and here, ſince an opportunity of ſpeaking to their good name will ſeldom offer, let me do juſtice to Mr. Dalton and his wife, who ſhewed not the leaſt partiality to their own children, but treated the little orphan with equal tenderneſs, care, and affection, which were returned by her with the ſame fondneſs they experienced from their own.

Anna continued here, without any material incident either to them or her, three years, improving every day. She was a fine chubby little girl when they took her firſt, but ſhe then began to promiſe ſome-

thing more; her features were regular and handſome, her complexion clear, and her countenance ſo inexpreſſibly pleaſing, that, though a great romp, ſhe was a general favourite, particularly with the governeſs, as the perſon was called who received her ſixpence every Monday. Her ſampler was exhibited as a pattern of good work, and, with what very poor inſtructions it was in the woman's power to give her, ſhe read with ſuch eaſe and propriety as aſtoniſhed both Dalton and his wife.

At this period an accident happened that gave a new turn to the fortune of my heroine.—Running with more agility than care acroſs the ſtreet from ſchool, which ſhe had often done, without a guide, her foot ſlipped, and, a gentleman's coach driving furiouſly along, the coachman could not pull in his horſes time enough to prevent her being thrown down and receiving ſeveral violent bruiſes. The lady who was in the carriage was poſſeſſed of great good nature and humanity: ſhe expreſſed the ſtrongeſt concern for the child; attended it home,

home, where ſhe continued in the moſt tender anxiety, till a ſurgeon had pronounced it out of danger, when ſhe left her with five guineas and an aſſurance of calling next day: ſhe was as good as her word, and continued to ſee the little angel (as ſhe called her) every morning till ſhe was entirely recovered from the ill effects of her fall.

Mrs. Melmoth (for that was the lady's name) found in the uncommon lovelineſs of Anna, ſomething that attracted her attention when humanity had no farther plea to offer, and her partiality for the charming child raiſed the curioſity of her huſband, at whoſe requeſt ſhe ſolicited Mr. Dalton's leave to carry her home to dinner, promiſing to return her in the evening.

Propitious to my heroine was this viſit; her engaging innocence, added to that nameleſs ſomething every body feels but none can deſcribe in an ingenuous countenance, together with the very pertinent anſwers ſhe made to the little queſtions put to her, endeared her to her new friends ſo ex-

ceſſively, that it was with reluctance they reſtored her to the Dalton's as Mrs. Melmoth promiſed.

Again and again was ſhe fetched and always returned loaded with finery and toys, inſomuch that the little Daltons were equipt with her ſuperfluities. A better ſchool, at the deſire of her benefactreſs, was ſought for, and all the expences defrayed by her.

When the parliament broke up, Mrs. Melmoth, though a very fine lady, declared her chief regret at leaving London was parting from her Anna; and, embracing her, with tears aſked if ſhe would come to ſee her.

Dalton ſaw with unſpeakable ſatisfaction the fondneſs of this lady for his ward, as there appeared a proſpect of wholly getting rid of her; for, if Mrs. Melmoth took it into her head once to take her entirely under her protection, he ſhould not only ſave her board, but, as in that caſe ſhe would never want it, her fortune alſo.

He, therefore, ſeized the opportunity, while the benevolent heart of Mrs. Melmoth

moth was melting in the warm effuſions of affection ſhe felt for Anna, of expatiating on the mercy of that Providence, who provided for the fatherleſs and deſtitute, and which had raiſed, in her, ſo kind a friend to an unhappy orphan.

The lady, who had always taken Anna for his daughter, was ſurpriſed at this ſpeech, and called on him, as he expected, for a farther explanation. He told the tale with what reſervations were neceſſary to his own intereſt, and what additions would moſt ſet off his own great charity, as well as work moſt effectually on the paſſions of his fair auditor.

Mrs. Melmoth felt herſelf exceedingly intereſted for her pet; and, had ſhe followed the firſt motion of her own inclinaaions, would have immediately taken her under her protection; but a moment's thought bade her defer it till ſhe had conſulted her huſband, from whoſe indulgence ſhe had every reaſon to expect a coincidence with her wiſhes, but without whoſe approbation ſhe never took any ſtep of conſequence;

her ſilence, and quitting town without the leaſt hint of any ſuch future intentions, made Dalton ſuppoſe the gudgeon had not bit.

Mr. Melmoth had ſet out for the Lodge (his ſeat in Wiltſhire) two days before his lady's laſt viſit to Anna, having a relation at Bath he wiſhed to ſee in his way.—As ſoon as Mrs. Melmoth joined him, ſhe made him acquainted with the piteous ſtory of Anna, which was graced by her tears, and delivered in a language that ſtole to the heart of her huſband, and, as they were not bleſſed with children, he anticipated her deſires, and himſelf propoſed taking the little orphan off the hands of the poor parſon.

Mr. Melmoth was a fond, a gallant, and a polite, huſband; to know what would make his wife happy, and to do it, (if in his power,) were one and the ſame thing to him.—When ſhe withdrew to dreſs, he haſtily ſnatched up a pen and wrote to Dalton as follows:

"SIR,

" Sir,

" Mrs. Melmoth is ſo charmed with " your Anna, and intereſted in the ſtory " you were ſo good as to communicate " concerning her, ſhe will not be happy " till we have her with us. A ſtage ſets " out from the Saracen's Head, Friday-" ſtreet, which paſſes our houſe; if no fe-" male paſſenger, who is known at the inn, " will take charge of her, you will be ſo " good as to commit her to the care of a " ſervant, and the ſooner ſhe ſets off the " more you will oblige,

" Sir,

" Your humble ſervant,

" Wm. Melmoth."

" Melmoth-Lodge."

This was diſpatched as ſoon as ſealed without taking any notice to Mrs. Melmoth of what he had done, as he formed to himſelf great pleaſure in agreeably ſurpriſing her with the ſight of her *protégée* before ſhe knew he had ſent for her.

Mr. Dalton was too much rejoiced at this now unhoped-for letter to defer an inſtant compliance with its contents: he immediately made the beſt of his way to the inn, where he was ſo lucky as to arrive, at the moment a luſty, red-faced, elderly, woman was taking her own place to go the next town beyond 'Squire Melmoth's, where ſhe told him, few people were better known, ſhe believed, than Dame Plunket. As this exoridum on herſelf was confirmed by the book-keeper, and, as he was in too great a hurry to get rid of his charge to be very nice about her company, he told her briefly he had a child to ſend to Mrs. Melmoth, and that the 'ſquire had ordered it to be put under the care of ſome female paſſenger.

On hearing this the countrywoman very readily undertook to deliver her at the Lodge: and, as the coach ſet off that evening, he returned in great haſte to ſet Anna off alſo.—But, notwithſtanding the good fortune of Anna was announced to her, with every poſſible aſſurance of the fine things ſhe would have, and the happineſs

ſhe

ſhe would enjoy with the lady, who had been already ſo good to her, the idea of being taken away from Mrs. Dalton, to whom ſhe ſo affectionately clung, that the good woman, reluctant before, was ſtill more grieved at parting with her; and the leaving her young playmates and companions filled her little heart with unſpeakable anguiſh; ſhe ſobbed and wept, nor could all the encouraging things ſaid by the whole family baniſh from her affectionate boſom her regret at leaving them.

Mrs. Dalton on her part beſought her huſband not to ſend her away; the expence of keeping ſuch a good little creature was a trifle they ſhould not be ſenſible of; ſhe even ventured to throw out ſome hints of juſtice.—But I have before ſaid his will was her law; unaccuſtomed to pay the leaſt regard to her opinion, except (as indeed was moſt generally the caſe) it was exactly his own, it was not likely he ſhould begin ſuch an unneceſſary piece of complaiſance on an occaſion where his own views and intereſt were ſo oppoſite to thoſe principles

of humanity and good nature by which his wife was actuated in her requeſt to detain the child.

His arguments were, that ſhe was a mere woman and a great fool, that ſhe did not know what was good for herſelf; and, which indeed was ſufficient to end a much greater conteſt,—he knew beſt; *ergo*, the child muſt go.

CHAPTER V.

An agreeable Companion in a Stage-Coach.

MRS. Plunket was a notable buſtling woman, who, having ſo far tranſgreſſed the rules of decency herſelf as to have been the mother of ſeveral children previous to her marriage with her late, or any other, huſband, was for fixing the value of her own preſent virtuous life by a comparative view of the faults of others, and ſo indefatigable was ſhe in her inquiries after the little blemiſhes of her neighbours, that not even the perſonal appearance of thoſe children could remind her of the reproach ſhe herſelf was liable to; all memory of her own errors was ſwallowed up in the exact regiſter of thoſe of other people.

Her curioſity was inſatiable; ſhe was a general enemy to unblemiſhed fame, and an

an univerſal retailer of every piece of ſcandal in the vicinity of her dwelling.—She was brought up in the late Mr. Melmoth's kitchen; who, being a widower ſome time before his death, was indolently indulgent to his ſervants, and had ſuffered this woman to continue in her place though her yearly excurſions were but too viſible even to him. The young 'ſquire not being quite ſo paſſive, ſhe was diſcharged as ſoon as he came to the eſtate, and, the former Mrs. Plunket dying ſoon after, was made an honeſt woman by the reputed father of her children, who was likewiſe a dependent at the Lodge, and had ſaved money enough to ſet up a large country ſhop. But the indignity ſhe had ſuffered in her diſmiſſion from the Lodge ſhe never forgot, though the ſcandal which occaſioned it was not remembered; and, as long as ſhe lived, if an opportunity offered of ſhewing her rancour towards the ſon of the man in whoſe ſervice her huſband had enriched himſelf, ſhe failed not, as far as ſhe dared, embracing it; ſhe was therefore not only gratifying a common, but a malignant,

lignant, curioſity, by inquiring, with an affected good humour, into every particular about Anna.—"Dear me, what a lovely "child! How could they part with it! But "ſhe ſuppoſed they had more!"—On being told by Mrs. Dalton (who accompanied Anna to the inn) it was not her own. —"Indeed! what, a relation?" "No," anſwered Mrs. Dalton, "it is an orphan "Mrs. Melmoth has perſuaded her huſ-"band to take off my hands."

Another trial would have been made by the inquiſitive dame to have gone farther into the hiſtory of her fellow-traveller, had not the ſtage-coachman informed her there was no time. She accordingly, by his aſſiſtance and the porter's, aſcended into the vehicle, and little Anna was torn from the neck of Mrs. Dalton to follow her.

When the door ſhut out her friends, and the carriage moved on, the cries of the child not a little diſturbed Mrs. Plunket, who, in an authoritative tone of voice, bid her ceaſe her bawling, which (though ſoothed by two other women paſſengers) ſo frightened

frightened Anna, that if ſhe continued weeping it was in ſilence, and, in a little while, the motion of the coach, with the late hour, threw her into a ſound ſleep, from which ſhe awoke not till they ſtopped to breakfaſt.

She ate heartily, and, though ſhe yet felt the parting with Mrs. Dalton, the face of nature, which ſhe had never before beheld, in fields and woods, with every other ſcene ſo perfectly new, diverted her attention, but ſhe ſtill remembered with diſguſt and fear the commanding voice of Dame Plunket.—Being again ſeated in the coach, that active woman went to work, aſking fifty queſtions.—As, where ſhe lived? How old ſhe was? Did ſhe know Mrs. Melmoth and the 'ſquire?—How long was it ſince ſhe had ſeen them?——The child, to her extreme mortification, either from diſlike of the woman, a ſudden fit of taciturnity, or cunning, preſerved a moſt obſtinate ſilence, It was in vain the dame ſought by fair means or foul to obtain the longed-for intelligence; ſhe could get nothing out of her; and when, at laſt, provoked

voked and enraged, ſhe gave up the trial ——" Augh! it was a deep one, ſhe would " warrant it!—Finely ſchooled and in- " ſtructed!—But it would not do!— " People might ſhut their eyes!—None " were ſo blind as thoſe that would not ſee! " —Madam Melmoth might carry her " head as high as ſhe pleaſed and make a " parade that ill became her!—An orphan " indeed!—There were full enough of her " own blood ſhe believed, if this were not " one of them, to take all and more than " the 'ſquire could ſpare!—For her part " ſhe hated upſtart quality!"

In this declaration ſhe was joined by her fellow-travellers, who obſerved thoſe were a ſort of gentry moſt apt to give themſelves airs. " Airs indeed!" returned Dame Plunket, acquiring conſequence in her own ideas from the attention of her companions, whoſe curioſity being excited, ſhe conde- ſcended to give them the following hiſtory of 'Squire Melmoth and his family,

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.

A Family Picture by a diſcarded Servant.

" WHY, you be to know, my father " and mother lived with father and grand- " father of preſent 'ſquire; nay, for that " matter, I lived there myſelf, and Mr. " Plunket lived there too, from generation " to generation, as the ſaying is; but, new " lords, new laws !—Old maſter left this " young one three thouſand pounds a year, " as good land as any in the country, and " all the young ladies fortuned off, and " maſter Billy dead: but, Lord! he ſhould " ha' been a parſon; for, Lord help him! " a' is but half-ſtarved: he is always a wri- " ting of books and verſes, and one non- " ſenſe or t'other; and then, to be ſure, " inſtead of minding the juſtice-buſineſs, as " old 'ſquire did, and quorum meetings, he " muſt

" muſt go to *Bedhemſted* a bathing, and fell
" in with this fine madam wi' never a far-
" din of fortune, for indeed how ſhould
" ſhe, her mother for ſartin's no better than
" ſhe ſhould be, and ſhe, *ſaving the law*,
" a bit of a baſtard; however, though ſhe
" had not a teſter of her own, ſhe could
" ſpend the 'ſquire's money faſt enough;
" there's one eſtate gone already; all the
" timber cut down, and the Lodge over
" head and ears in debt, pulling down one
" houſe, and putting up t'other, from
" country to town, and racketing all over
" the kingdom; then coming whoam, and
" flaunting it away with as much finery on
" her back as would keep a decent family
" ſeven years; tired of her fine new houſe
" now ſhe has got it, while he, poor ſap,
" ſays as ſhe ſays! as long as he can but be
" ſhut up reading his Canterbury tales he
" does not care, not he; and now here is
" another whim, as thof' there was not
" poor children enow in Somerſetſhire.
" I am ſure Madam Aſhby, the 'ſquire's
" ſiſter, often and often ſaid to me, Mrs.
" Plunket,

" Plunket, ſays ſhe, theſe are ſad doings
" of my brother; and often and often I
" goes to ſhe, and drinks tea with ſhe; but
" I ſuppoſe t'other gewgaw thing would
" break her neck afore her ſilence to a poor
" body!——Not ſo poor netther," bridling, " thank God, I can pay every body
" their own, and that's a comfort!"

" To be ſure, ſo it is," returned the two women, much obliged and delighted at the family-ſtory of a parliment-man; which, notwithſtanding ſome exaggerations, being in the main true, I have given my readers in the words of the all-intelligent Dame Plunket.

Mr. Melmoth, as ſhe ſaid, inherited his eſtate clear and unincumbered, and his lady had the double misfortune of being very poor and very handſome; ſhe was young, lively, and agreeable, and, being bred up at a watering-place, had imbibed a taſte for pleaſure and expence, which her huſband, ſo far from reſtraining, gave the moſt indulgent way to: his rent-roll he had not thought incumbent to ſhew her; and her

thoughtleſſneſs

thoughtleſſneſs was but a copy of his own; ſo that the wonder would have been, if, after a few years toniſh living on the part of the lady, they had not been pretty much involved: however, as they had no family, (and his ideas were really, as Mrs. Plunket ſaid, taken up in trips to Parnaſſus,) they went on ſpending and mortgaging; few, very few, people caring how ſoon they were ruined, although their extravagance was the talk of the country.

Mrs. Plunket was not, as may be ſuppoſed, a favourite at the Lodge, whoſe owners were too good-natured to delight in ſcandal, and too much engaged to ſtand in need of ſuch deſpicable auxiliaries to help them to kill time.

But ſhe made it up at the houſes of ſome of the other branches of the Melmoth family, who, having none of Mrs. Melmoth's misfortunes, (being rich, ugly, and ill-natured,) could not be cordially affectionate to her; in fine, they hated her, her dreſs, her taſte, equipage, and liveries, and, above

bove all, her beauty rendered her at once an object of blame and envy.

Mrs. Plunket knew this too well to doubt whether a new inſtance of folly and expence would be acceptable, and therefore alighted, about two miles on the London ſide of the Lodge, at Mrs. Aſhby's, to drop her news, pinning a paper to Anna, directed to Madam Melmoth at the Lodge: whether this was the invention of ignorance, or impudence, or both, I will not ſay; but the appearance it carried when the ſtage ſtopped at the 'ſquire's ſet the houſe in an uproar.

Mr. Melmoth and his lady were both out; the latter having written that day for Anna, and the former (though he did not expect her ſo ſoon) enjoying in idea the agreeable ſurpriſe he had prepared for her.

Dalton, ever prudent and conſiderate, obſerved to his wife, that as Anna was going to gentlefolks, a ſpecies of beings who ſeldom cared how their money went, and who certainly would ſoon buy her clothes to their own taſte, it was needleſs to ſend any with her;—beſides bundles might be loſt or miſ-

laid;

laid;—what things ſhe did not take would fit Polly, and ſuch an extravagant lady as Madam Melmoth would not thank them for ſaving her money.

Mrs. Dalton had no power, or indeed inclination, to oppoſe arguments which left her in poſſeſſion of all the gay things given to her late ward; the child therefore was ſent off, as I have related, with her whole wardrobe on her back.

The porter who anſwered the ſtage-coachman's ring at the gate, having no inſtruction from his maſter or miſtreſs, was ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at the ſight of Anna, and the coachman's demand of the part of her fare left unpaid, as is uſual, at the inn in town.—A child he had never heard of, ſo ſent, and ſo directed, was indeed an extraordinary circumſtance; and ſo much did it ſtagger him, that, before he would venture to receive our heroine within the gates, or pay her carriage, he ſummoned the houſekeeper, who was followed by all the maids, and they by the footmen. The porter thought it was a trick to palm

the

the child on their maſter. "More likely "to ſend him his own!" cried the cook. "Like enough," anſwered a new footman from madam's country, "you lived with "his honour before he was married;" adding, with a ſignificant wink, "'hap, "Peggy, you may know the mother?"—An inſinuation, however indirect or obſcure, that implies a doubt of the chaſtity of a woman, who, conſcious of not poſſeſſing any of that troubleſome virtue, is not only never forgiven, but ſure to be the object of ſpight and rancour to the perſon ſo offended.

Unluckily the private feelings of poor Margaret were but too ſore; ſhe conſequently fired up;—"Why, how now, "Mr. Powdermonkey, you have opened "your mouth and ſaid nothing," retorted ſhe with an inflamed face and raiſed voice. "If the girl belonged to my maſter's ſide "of the houſe ſhe would not hardly have "been ſent packing:—no, no," bridling, "we are no flinchers in 'Somerzetſhire! "The girl, I dare ſay, is Suſſex; ſhe is as

"like

like madam as ſhe can ſtare; and that I will ſay if I looſe my place!"

The honour of John, now doubly wounded by the reflection on his miſtreſs and the ſtigma on his country, would not ſuffer him patiently to endure ſuch an affront; the majority of the ſervants being natives of the place, and of courſe ſiding with Margery, words ran high; Mr. John being ſupported only by Mrs. Kitty, the lady's maid, whoſe humble ſervant he was; for Mrs. Elton, the houſekeeper, (though miſtreſs both of volubility and weight of argument,) had, in moſt matters, ſo much to ſay on both ſides, that it was difficult, and indeed impoſſible, to tell which ſhe was moſt partial to, at leaſt till the opinion of her ſuperiors were known.—In the midſt of this clamour (every tongue going at once) it was in vain the coachman preſſed to be diſcharged; they had now almoſt gone beyond words; yet one point ſeemed to be determined on by both the contending powers, which was, that the girl could not belong to them.

The coachman obſtinately perſiſted i
leaving her, and they as obſtinately refuſe
to take her in.

Poor Anna, terrified at ſo many ſtrang
faces, all bending their inauſpicious, look
on her, ſcreamed loudly (though ſhe kne
not why) as the coachman lifted her fro
the coach.—Mrs. Melmoth's maid, wh
was her great favourite, having caught
fever the beginning of the winter in Londo
had been ſent home for the air before Anna'
accident; ſhe therefore knew nothing abo
her; and the coachman and ſervants, w
had ſeen their miſtreſs's fondneſs for h
were now out with them.

But, at this inſtant, it fortunately happe
ed that our heroine had one friend and a
quaintance at Melmoth-Lodge, to wh
good offices ſhe owed her not being turn
into the ſtreet; this was an Italian gre
hound, between whom and Anna th
ſubſiſted a mutual affection; her ſcrea
in a voice the favourite animal well kn
no ſooner reached him, than he ran
and rejoiced the heart of his little acquai
an

ance, who, in her tranſports at ſeeing Ninon, forget all her tribulation, and thought only of careſſing her very ſeaſonable friend.

John took advantage of this circumſtance, which diſcovered the child to be known to his miſtreſs, and, putting her under the care of Mrs. Kitty, promiſed to relate all that had been ſaid when his honour came home.

Thus the entrance of our heroine into Melmoth-Lodge, whoſe own diſpoſition would have qualified her for the harbinger of peace and love, was hailed by the diſcord and ill-will of all its dependents.

Mrs. Elton would now fain have claimed ſome merit by her attention; but Mrs. Kitty told her, with a ſneer, that, ſince the child was ſo like her miſtreſs, ſhe would keep her in the dreſſing-room till ordered to the contrary.

Tired with the long journey, and overpowered by ſleep, long before Mrs. Melmoth returned, Anna was dead to the cares which, in a more advanced age, migth have

robbed her of reſt; from this happy inſenſibility ſhe was awakened by the fond and rapturous careſſes of her benefactreſs, who, on retiring to her room a little fatigued, was throwing herſelf on the ſofa, when ſhe beheld, faſt aſleep and beautiful as an angel, her little pet.

Mr. Melmoth immediately explained the myſtery, and received his wife's acknowledgement for his kind attention to her wiſhes; then, turning again to the child, ſhe almoſt ſmothered her with her embraces. Anna was at firſt rather peeviſh; but, as ſoon as quite awake, ſhe recollected Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth: her lively and innocent joy was as unbounded as ſincere, and gave the higheſt gratification to her friends, who every moment felt themſelves more intereſted for her, and more pleaſed at their own generous adoption of ſo amiable a child.

The next morning Mr. melmoth was made acquainted with the ſpeeches of Margery and thoſe of her fellow-ſervants who had ſided with her: the 'ſquire, enraged at

at their insolent reflections on his lady, insisted immediately on dismissing them; and, though the little kindness Anna had received from Mr. John and Mrs. Kitty was purely in opposition to the other servants, it was amply rewarded, as well by the commendations of their master and mistress as by more substantial proofs of their approbation.

Every body knows that the transactions of a great house in the country become more or less the immediate concern of every individual within the reach of its influence or example, particularly on such an occasion as removing domestics, whose natural connexions are in the neighbourhood.—Mr. Melmoth's cook, dairy and house maids, his groom-helper, and undergardner, found themselves much injured by that gentleman's choosing to discharge them; those injuries it was not necessary for them to keep secret; they were therefore communicated first to their relations, next to the servants of the adjacent great houses, and, lastly, to the heads of those

great houſes themſelves, particularly to the relations of their late maſter: what were the candid comments of the neighbourhood of Melmoth-Lodge, on this extraordinary exertion of benevolence and charity in its owners, will be ſeen in the ſucceeding pages.

CHAPTER VII.

A Plan for female Education.

MRS. Melmoth, with the vivacity that generally attends the new undertakings of a fine lady living in the country, whoſe amuſements are principally calculated rather to paſs away time than enjoy it, now ſet about clothing our heroine; all her maids were employed; and a ſervant diſpatched to Dame Plunket, at the next market-

ket-town, for the fineſt linen, and every other article her ſhop could ſupply of the beſt ſort and higheſt price.

Mrs. Melmoth was no œconomiſt; the thing ſhe was leaſt acquainted with was the value of money; indeed but little of that article went through her hands, as the bills were paid by the ſteward; but there was a thing ſhe was very clever at, and that was giving orders; Anna was therefore not only well ſtocked in all ſorts of neceſſaries, but ſhe abounded in ſuperfluities; and the amount of Mrs. Plunket's bill was carefully conveyed to good Mrs. Aſhby and her confidential friends.

As ſoon as ſhe was equipped ſhe became the conſtant companion of her patroneſs, who failed not to exhibit her to the beſt advantage, nor made any viſits within a few miles of the Lodge unattended by her pet.

At Mrs. Aſhby's, however, and at ſome other ladies in the neighbourhood, ſhe found an unaccountable coldneſs and a reſtrained civility that aſtoniſhed her; all common meſſages in the family-way were anſwered

with a hauteur and caprice that appeared to Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth truly ridiculous. Unconſcious of giving them any cauſe for ſuch an abſurd change in their behaviour, they ſought not an eclairciſſement; their acquaintance with them declined gradually; and in a ſhort time, all communication between them and the ladies of the family wholly ceaſed.

The circle of their viſits being, by this means, contracted, our heroine excited more of their love and attention: an Engliſh governeſs was procured for her, whoſe character and abilities, for the ſtation ſhe filled, were atteſted by people of unqueſtionable honour; ſhe was near forty, and had been ſo happy as to give ſatisfaction to different families twenty years of her life, that ſhe had undertaken the arduous taſk of forming the minds and manners of young ladies; ſhe did not profeſs to teach them the fluent uſe of the French tongue, though ſhe ſpoke it herſelf, and underſtood its grammatical rudiments; but ſhe was perfect miſtreſs of the Engliſh, reading the beſt of

our

our authors with the greateſt propriety and critical judgement; ſhe was eſteemed one of the fineſt needle-women of the age; wrote a clean, good, hand; underſtood muſic much better than ſhe could execute, and was ſo nice a judge of time, that her attendance on her young pupils in their practice and leſſons was of the moſt infinite advantage to them; ſhe was perfectly neat in her perſon, and ſtrictly virtuous in her conduct; her principles were uncorrupted by a ſingle deviation from propriety, and her ſoul was untarniſhed by one mean or diſhoneſt thought; her underſtanding and accompliſhments qualified her for the ſociety of the learned, while the ſimplicity of her manners and the goodneſs of her heart rendered her the beloved friend and companion of uninformed youth.—Such was the perſon to whoſe care the fortunate orphan was conſigned at a very liberal ſalary.

Mr. Melmoth was, we have obſerved, a man of letters; he was, indeed, ſo fond of holding converſe with the dead, that hiſtory, antient and modern, as well as poe-

try and the belles lettres, engroſſed more of his time, when in the country, than was, perhaps, conſiſtent with the warm affection he bore his wife, or the true politeneſs and attention a fine young woman may be thought to expect. When he left her alone for hours, preferring his dear books to her ſociety, his heart ſmote him for it, and he ſeemed ſo conſcious of a conduct, for which hs felt ſelf-condemned, (though he wanted the reſolution to change it,) that he ſeized with avidity every opportunity of obliging or contributing to her amuſement. When, therefore, he ſaw her buſied and happy in the management of Anna, he gave every encouragement to what, if it may be called a weakneſs, was a very amiable one. Maſters, at a very great expence, were procured to teach her muſic, dancing, and drawing; and Mr. Melmoth, farther to oblige his lady, not only conſented to pay for the beſt inſtructions in thoſe lines the country afforded, but condeſcended to ſuperintend the literary part of her education himſelf; —a circumſtance not more favourable

to

to the inſtructed than honourable to the inſtructor.

Mr. Melmoth, though a great ſcholar, deſpiſed pedantry; his paſſion for the Greek and Latin was indulged only in his cloſet, and his admiration of the Muſes confined to his ſecret interviews with them.

Few equalled him in learning or underſtanding; in goodneſs he was exceeded by none; he was well bred, polite, and humane: the inſtructions of ſuch a man promiſed to be, and certainly were, of the greateſt advantage to the orphan he patroniſed: the rapid progreſs ſhe made in her ſtudies ſoon rendered the taſk his goodneſs and humanity had impoſed, an agreeable amuſement. He pleaſed himſelf in obſerving how ſtrictly ſhe attended to the rules he laid down for the formation of her mind and manners; he inſpired her with the pride of virtue and the love of truth; he taught her ſentiments founded on the baſis of the pureſt honour; nor did he forget to encourage every ſpark of humanity and benevolence in her compoſition.

With a genius uncommonly lively, and talents to compaſs every thing, it is little wonder that in four years ſhe became accompliſhed. Her ſummers were employed in her ſtudies, the winter in repeating her exerciſes to her amiable governeſs, whoſe endeavours were to render her pupil worthy the continued favour of her benefactors. Anna really deſerved the encomiums beſtowed upon her: her rooms were adorned with her drawings; her works framed in the beſt apartments; and her taſte and execution on the harpſicord were unequalled in that part of the world.

Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth, when the duties of parliament called him to London, left her with regret; and the pleaſure they felt at her perſonal improvement, on their return to the country, was always increaſed by their obſervations of her mental ones; nor, young as ſhe was, when taken under the protection of her preſent friends, did ſhe forget her obligations to her early ones; ſhe had been told her claims on the Daltons were not thoſe of blood; and, ſuppoſing,

ſing, in their care and affection, they had been actuated only by the ſoft bond of charity and compaſſion, her little heart expanded with grateful ſenſations; ſhe conſtantly wrote to them from the time ſhe could firſt join her letters; and, Mr. Melmoth's indulgence ſupplying her with the means, ſhe was continually ſending ſuch preſents as the country produced: pork, poultry, and game, they received in abundance from her, which being all carriage paid, and her letters franked, were advantages the doctor, on his part, never failed acknowledging, taking care to ſeaſon his letters with ſpiritual inſtructions and religious exhortations.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Scheme for Reformation.

OUR heroine was now entered in the twelfth year of her age, when an event happened at Melmoth-Lodge, which protended at leaſt a diviſion of the affection of her benefactreſs. The lady's pregnancy was announced, to the inexpreſſible joy of Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth: an heir was the firſt wiſh of their hearts although the length of time, which had elapſed ſince their marriage without its being gratified, had, in ſome meaſure, reconciled them to what appeared the will of heaven; but their acquieſence was the effect of neceſſity, not choice. Their joy was however, not a little clouded by the growing embaraſſment of their circumſtances.

Mr.

Mr. Melmoth's total inattention to his affairs, and his blind indulgance to his wife in all the toniſh extravagances of the age, which were every winter increaſing, had ſo much involved his eſtate, that, before the birth of his child, one half of its inheritance was wholly alienated, and the other deeply mortgaged. The appearance of the little ſtranger added to the inquietude of its father: he had hitherto read and written while the profits of his acres were flying over the town or ſinking into the purſes of fraudulent dependents and licentious ſervants, but his Eliza brought with her new cares as well as new affections.

Mrs. Melmoth, who was brought up in a ſtyle of life which obliged her mother, while ſhe ſet her daughter off to the beſt advantage in her power, to ſave it out of unſeen neceſſaries, having once attained the projected end, which was that of marrying well, thought the riches of a man with three thouſand pounds a year were endleſs; and, as her huſband had never ſtinted her in whatever ſhe choſe to ſpend, it had not

been her inquiry or concern to know how his circumſtances ſtood; nor did he ſoon awake her from the intoxicating reverie into which luxury and diſſipation had lulled her but when, before the ſummer was over ſhe gave him notice of a ſecond bleſſing in the increaſe of his family, he, with great tenderneſs, informed her of the ſtate of his finances. Her diſtreſs, which was great joined to her fondneſs for her child, had at firſt nearly overpowered her reaſon. After ſome time, however, ſhe entered with the greateſt alacrity into a reform in their expences; the ſuperfluous ſervants were diſcharged; all the carriages but the family coach were laid down and the horſes ſold Mrs. Melmoth would no more go to London; and Mr. Melmoth's principles ſetting him above the hopes of advantage to himſelf from the ſeat he held in the ſenate, he to the ſurpriſe of his friends, reſigned it. The town-houſe and furniture were diſpoſed of; and, before the ſecond child made its appearance, Mr. Melmoth, by having hapily got rid of ſo many incum-

brance

brances, had time to be both a family-man and an author, while Mrs. Melmoth commenced a mere country lady, who was very well ſatisfied now to find ſhe had the uſe of her limbs.

Happily for our heroine ſhe was not yet conſidered one of the ſuperfluities it was neceſſary to diſcard, but her inſtructors were. Mrs. Barlow indeed was a very worthy woman; her they could not think of parting with, as their Eliza would ſoon be under her care; but muſic, dancing, and drawing, for Anna, were immediately given up. The time, uſually devoted to thoſe accompliſhments, was filled by our heroine, very pleaſurably to herſelf, in the nurſery, with the children of her patroneſs, of whom ſhe was exceſſively fond; and they, as is ever the caſe with infants, ſoon found by whom they were beloved. Thus we ſee (however the degeneracy of human nature may influence our maturer actions) gratitude is the firſt ſenſation obſervable in the attachments of young minds. Mrs. Barlow, notwithſtanding her deſire of being always with the children,

children, kept her, at ſtated times, to the conſtant repetition of thoſe leſſons which had been ſo expenſive to Mr. Melmoth; ſhe was indefatigable in her intreaties to Anna, not, by forgetting thoſe valuable branches of female education, to give cauſe to her patrons to regret the time and money beſtowed on her.

This good woman knew (what a dependent in a gentleman's family frequently does not) the reduced circumſtances of her employers, and foreſaw her young pupil could not long enjoy the ſunſhine ſhe now experienced. The heart of Mrs. Barlow was the throne of humanity as well as the ſeat of virtue; ſhe had heard the orphan ſtate of Anna; and eſteem, firſt founded on her amiable diſpoſition and riveted by compaſſion, now endeared to her the child of miſfortune much more than, with the ſame attractions, ſhe would have done in happier circumſtances. To make her an uſeful member of ſociety, ſhe now conceived the greateſt ſervice ſhe could do the young creature ſhe entirely loved, and therefore blend-

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ed her domeſtic needle-work with ornamental. Anna conquered every thing; ſhe ſoon put Mrs. Melmoth out of conceit with her millener. No cap or hat pleaſed but thoſe of Anna's making; the family needle-work went all through her hands, and ſhe became, to the great pleaſure of Mrs. Barlow and the gratification of her own pride, of real uſe to her benefactreſs.

About this time, when Anna was entering her fourteenth year, Colonel———— But what am I about? to introduce a hero at the end of a chapter! He deſerves and ſhall have one to himſelf.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.

The Nabob.

COLONEL GORGET was a little man with a ſallow complexion, ſmall black eyes, Roman noſe, and fine teeth, at this time about fifty years old, an immenſe favourite (as he himſelf was ſo good as to inform his acquaintance) of all the great men of the age, and of all the fine women of the late and preſent race of beauties. He was the ſon of a lady of good family, the widow of a near neighbour and a valued friend of the late Mr. Melmoth, who unfortunately, in an excurſion to Bath, was prevailed on to give her hand to an Iriſh adventurer, equally deſtitute of property, character, or principle. After diſſipating what fortune his bride was in poſſeſſion of, he had the addreſs to perſuade her to give up her very conſiderable

conſidereble jointure: and when that was ſpent, with a vaſt deal of tenderneſs and good humour, he gave her conſtant exerciſe for patience and reſignation, by involving her alternately in thoſe ſcenes of affluence and diſtreſs to which the life of a profeſſed gameſter is ſubject. Thoſe exerciſes, which recalled with bitterneſs to her memory the calm and honourable life ſhe lived with her firſt huſband, ſo preyed on her ſpirits and injured her conſtitution, that ſhe died unlamented, and almoſt unpitied, in her fortieth year, leaving one ſon by her ſecond huſband. Him on her death-bed, ſhe recommended to the good Mr. Melmoth, whoſe regard for the relict of his friend outlived his diſpleaſure at her folly and imprudence.

Mr. Gorget, whether from a confidence in this gentleman's goodneſs, a want of feeling for his ſon, poverty, or all theſe reaſons united, ſoon after his lady's death, abandoned his child and left the kingdom. This was the kindeſt thing he could have done for young Gorget, for Mr. Melmoth held

held the character of the father in such contempt and abhorrence, that it must have been on a very extraordinary occasion indeed he would meddle in the family-concerns of such a man; but the pitiable situation of the boy was no sooner made known to him, than he gave orders for furnishing him with proper necessaries, and put him to a reputable academy in the vicinity of the metropolis.

His genius was of that equivocal nature, that, though he could by no means be called a dunce, he never could be made a scholar; indeed he fenced, danced, and made verses in the *double entendre* style, better than any youth in the school. On a consultation between his patron and the master of the academy, that gentleman's first scheme of bringing him up to the church, where he had a presentation which he kept open for him, was laide aside on account of his trifling turn, and an ensigncy in a marching reigment procured, as more suitable to his talents and disposition. Here then, at the age of eighteen, we find him beginning

beginning the world with two ſuits of regimentals, a dozen of ſhirts, and twenty guineas in his pocket.

As the pay of his commiſion was very inadequate to the expences attendant on the life of a man of mean pride and vicious pleaſures, before he attained the age of twenty-two, although, by the intereſt of his friend, his income was enlarged by his advancing in rank from enſign to captain, he was involved in debt to every tradeſman whoſe credulity rendered him the dupe of his plauſible tales, as he conſtantly paſſed himſelf on them for the ward of Mr. Melmoth, and gave himſelf credit for a large fortune in that gentleman's hands.

With a diſpoſition wherein cruelty and ingratitude were blended, he poſſeſſed all the powers neceſſary to riſe in a polite circle; he had an infinity of ſmall talk; ſervility enough to render him invulnerable to common rebuffs; and patience to endure, with an affected complacence, the proud man's ſcorn; he had a ſigh for the afflicted, an indignant glow for the oppreſſed, and his

his ſoftened voice profeſſed univerſal charity for thoſe who were griped by the hard hands of poverty and want.

Thoſe were the outlines of a character, the moſt complicated and contemptible of the human ſpecies; for, though a ſenſe of his narrow circumſtances and ſmall hopes taught him to practiſe thoſe leſſons of non-reſiſtance and lip-deep humility, (for which indeed a late noble writer was his ſanction,) his heart was the receptacle of vices, the reverſe of thoſe virtues of which he made ſo oſtentatious a parade: he was proud, envious, unforgiving, and ſelfiſh; inſomuch that, in no one voluntary act of his life, did he forget to conduct himſelf ſo as not to further his own intereſt; a common injurer of others, he never forgave one offered himſelf; to thoſe, whoſe rank and fortune were either above or (if equal) independent of him, he was the very eſſence of humility, good humour, and complaiſance; but, to thoſe few whom Providence in its anger had placed under his inſolent juriſdiction, his arrogance and cruelty were unbounded.

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The puniſhments he inflicted on his fellow-creatures, unhappily under his command, for the ſlighteſt offence, held him up to the ſoldiery as an object of deteſtation, while he flattered himſelf, that, under the ſanction of ſtrict diſcipline, he veiled the real luſt of power and the mercileſs diſpoſition of his ſoul.

Could this man be ſuſpected of announcing himſelf the champion of the ſofter paſſions! of valuing himſelf on his ſucceſs while the gentle ſex, whoſe nature ſhrinks from tyranny, and whoſe eyes involuntarily turn from the perpetrators of unfeeling barbarity! One would imagine it impoſſible! but his was, as I have ſaid, a complicated character; it was, as far as one evil can be oppoſite to another, a contradictory one.

The experience a cloſe and conſtant obſervation of the motives, as well as actions, of mankind gave him, added to his art and cunning, and theſe aided by a natural ſmoothneſs of ſpeech and plauſibility of manners, furniſhed him with powers to impoſe himſelf on his own ſex, as a man void

of deſign or guilt. What then had a woman to arm herſelf with againſt his inſidious ſnares; his perſon, which was rather diſguſting than otherwiſe, was indeed a kind of ſecurity againſt his attempts; but, as if (which was not the caſe) he had been himſelf conſcious of that defect, he was ſeldom known to begin his attack till he had wormed himſelf into the good opinion of the deſtined victim by a ſemblance of thoſe virtues ſhe loved, found out her weak ſide; and where ſhe was vulnerable: that point once gained, you, of my own ſex, who have fallen, and you of the other, who, by admiting men of this ſtamp into your families, have loſt, in the honour of the female, the pride and felicity of your lives, you go before me and know what follows.

Inconſtancy is ever the companion of intrigue; and when I have ſaid it was this man's boaſt never to have had a connection with a woman who had not her reputation to looſe, nor ever had honour or delicacy to conceal the lapſe he himſelf had occaſioned, it will exhibit him as an object

ject of envy to thoſe (and many there are) of his own deſcription, and inſpire the good with horror, and the juſt with contempt.

CHAPTER X.

The Nabob continued.

CAPTAIN Gorget had begun and continued in ſuch an expenſive ſtyle, that, having worn out every expedient of impoſing on the generoſity of his patron, and finding the credulity of his tradeſman beginning to give way to the calls of neceſſity, it became prudent, as he entered his twenty-fourth year, for him to vary the ſcene: he accordingly exchanged with an officer in ill health, who was ordered to India, and, who not only gave up ſuperior rank, but preſented

our hero with a ſum of money ſufficient to equip him for the voyage, and recommended him to the general-officer, who commanded the regiment, in terms which his ready wit, artful manners, and ſpecious appearance, greatly improved; he inſinuated himſelf with great eaſe into his commander's favour, whoſe open heart was by no means a match for this deſigner and his entertaining converſation procured him a general invitation to his table and houſe.

And here commenced his firſt public entrance into the annals of modern gallantry. —The general grew more pleaſed with his new officer every day:—he made him his aid-de-camp, and generouſly offered, on finding him in rather embarraſſed circumſtances, to lend him money ſufficient to enable him to leave England out of debt. In gratitude for this diſintereſted kindneſs, his friend's wife became the object of his cautious, but warm, purſuit.

The general was a *bon vivant*, he loved his bottle and enjoyed his friend; intoxication too often ſucceeded the exhilaration of

of his ſpirits, and rendered him unfit for the bed of a delicate, beautiful, young wife, who, innocent as ſhe was handſome, paſſed over with great good humour this one failing in a man, to whom ſhe was married (though of a good family) without a fortune, and whoſe delight it was to ſupport her in the moſt ſplendid and happy ſtyle. —No wiſh of her heart was ungratified; till the cruel ſpoiler came, who, ruthleſſly taking advantage of the confidence repoſed in him by the fond huſband and the unſuſpicious innocent wife, ſoon contrived to inſpire her with thoſe ſentiments which baniſhed honour and gratitude. In a word, after convincing her how unworthy of ſuch a treaſure the man was who could neglect it, and by exaggerating charms he ſwore would grace a diadem, his next ſtep was to guide her attention from a man, much older than herſelf, who undervalued her beauty, to a lover, of her own age, who adored it.

Too eaſily he perſuaded her to gratify a doting paſſion, ſo ſuperior to the man's

whoſe name ſhe bore;—one had already known decay, the other, never, never, could; it would be a ceaſeleſs fund of bliſs and rapture, over which time itſelf would have no power!—In an evil hour this lovely young creature, whoſe natural and acquired endowments might have ornamented any ſociety, gave up her claim to all but the moſt abandoned!

Too much elated with his ſucceſs, and too vain to conceal it, he made a ſubaltern, who hated him, the confident of his complicated treachery. Soon was the injured huſband acquainted with his diſhonour, and as ſoon furniſhed with proof ſufficient to intitle him to a divorce. But, ah! how inadequate to the pangs of diſappointed, ill-requited, love are the moſt ample retributions of the law!—It could puniſh the violator of his honour! it could ſeparate him from his guilty wife!—But, could it take from him the memory of her beauty and innocence?—Could it ſhed oblivion's eaſing influence over his mind, and baniſh thence the charms he adored?—Could it

leſſen

leſſen the reproaches of his own heart, for admitting, to his domeſtic circle, a man of the world, a declared pupil of the Cheſterfield ſyſtem?—Ah! no!—Nor law, nor revenge, nor even time, can ſubdue the anguiſh of ſuch reflections.—The goodneſs of her heart, the elegance of her manners, recurring to his imagination, with the aggravation that one was corrupted, the other loſt to him, and that for ever, if he carried on a proſecution: theſe, added to his unabated love for her perſon, ſpoke peace and forgiveneſs in the ſtern heart of the injured ſoldier.—Violent were his conflicts; but love, all-conquering love, overcame reſentment!—He ſent her word, if on the honour ſhe once held ſacred, ſhe would give up every farther thought of her ſeducer, as they were going to leave the kingdom, where, long before their return, the matter would be forgotten, he would forgive and never mention the paſt.

Generous as was this offer, the ill-fated woman refuſed it.—Fond of her undoer, and in full confidence of the honour and

fidelity the noble captain had ſo often called the hoſts of heaven to witneſs, and finding herſelf in a way that promiſed another link to an attachment ſhe fondly hoped would end but with her life, ſhe frankly owned her ſituation; acknowledged her huſband's goodneſs; but avowed, the kneeling world ſhould not tempt her to give up the beſt, the moſt amiable, of men, her dear captain.

Rage and reſentment, in proportion to his love and diſappointment, now filled the ſoul of the injured huſband. In his firſt tranſports he vowed deſtruction to the villain that had undone him.

To extirpate him from the face of the earth would have been an act of common juſtice to mankind; but his friends prevailed on him to adopt that mode moſt adequate to the puniſhment and expoſure of ſuch a wretch. —The law was ſlower in its operations than revenge could well brook; but it was nevertheleſs ſure. Ruin muſt attend his proſecution of a man, who had offended the laws of ſociety, without friends or ability

to

to pay the penalty inflicted.—He, therefore, reſigned his lucrative employment, the reward of many years hard ſervice, to purſue, with unremitting vengeance, the unfortunate captain.

In the mean time the lady wrote her adorer word of what had paſſed between her and her huſband, and pleaſed herſelf with the grateful raptures he would feel at ſo noble a proof of her regard as the voluntary ſacrifice ſhe made him; but, who can paint her grief and conſternation, at receiving an anſwer full of the keeneſt reproaches for the ruin her nonſenſical heroiſm muſt bring on him: he conjured her, on any terms, to make her peace with the general. The farce, he told her, was ended; for, ſettle it how ſhe would, he could ſee her no more. His income was not only ſmall but incumbered, and totally inſufficient for the maintenance of the child ſhe was ſo good as to promiſe him, but which, in his humble opinion, would be much better diſpoſed of to the ge-

neral. He concluded, by assuring her, he was,

With the most inviolable regard,

Her most obliged,

Most gratefully devoted,

Humble servant,

PATRICK GORGET.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XI.

A Digreſſion.

COULD here my humble pen, by painting the ſoul-rending conſequence of a licentious amour, ſet one innocent heart on its guard againſt the deſtructive arts of thoſe who delight in infamy, (the true meaning of the word gallantry,) I would eſteem my fame immortal. Sacred ſhould be that pen that could call on the daughters of purity to reflect on the ſure conſequences of a deviation from the calm paths of innocence and honour.

When your frailty is expoſed, (paſſing over the agony of parents, the ſhame of children, the ſorrow of friends, the diſgrace of families, and the triumph of enemies,) reflect on the immediate conſequence to yourſelves!

You will find the doors of uncontaminated reputation barred againſt you, the eye of virtue turns from your glance, the cheek of modeſty bluſhes at your approach, and the boſom of purity is no longer open to your careſſes; yet, the mortification you feel, at being ſhunned by the worthy women of your acquaintance, is nothing to that which is inflicted by the ſupercilious brows and keen reproach of thoſe, who owe to their ſuperior cunning, art, caution, or want of attractions, more, far more, than to any merit or virtue of their own, that they have not preceded you in the miſerable lot you are doomed to bear.

Think, while men of honour and uprightneſs treat you with the moſt petrifying coldneſs and neglect, the worthleſs and abandoned will laugh at your pretenſions to common reſpect, and conclude no inſult can be offered to you: their right, to treat a woman of no character as their own impertinent whims direct, they aver to be indiſputable. You muſt fly to hide your guilty head in ſolitude the moſt dreary to

bid

bid defience to remorſe, or aſſociate with the moſt abandoned of both ſexes!

Think, while you bear evils and are ſubject to inſults innumerable, that your ſeducer raiſes his unbluſhing front, even in the preſence of a ſovereign, whoſe whole life is one leſſon of moral rectitude.—Such is the blind imprudence of cuſtom, it is no uncommon thing to ſee a man, who is under proſecution for the breach of every law of hoſpitality, ſcandalize the ſelect parties of ſome of the firſt married pairs in the kingdom. He ſuffers no inconvenience, labours under no diſgrace, is ſubject to no mortification, nor feels the ſlow and moving finger of pointed ſcorn; it is rather a recommendation of him that he has ruined you.

This digreſſion has no apology but the motive which is excited by the ſubject.

The agonies of death were not equal to thoſe endured by the wretched Mrs. Summers on peruſal of Gorget's letter.—Anguiſh and deſpair ſeized her ſad heart; ſhe had not a friend, him ſhe had injured only excepted, who would receive or conſole her!

her!—An outcaſt from ſociety!—what ſhould ſhe do?—Could ſhe take the advice of the callous captain, and carry polution to the arms of a man of honour?—Could her heart, reeking with the wounds of unmanly cruelty, ſtill beating in tenderneſs for the author of her ſhame and miſery, now receive the forgiving love of the noble-minded Summers?—No! her ſoul diſdained ſuch meanneſs! it yet abhorred deceit!

In the courſe of her deliberations, ſhe had time to reflect on the wretched fallacy and ruinous import of thoſe arguments, by which ſhe was undone.—She ſaw the monſter without his cloathing! but how, alas! did that relieve her aching boſom? it rather aggravated than appeaſed her ſorrows; which, ſtrengthened by unavailing repentance, in a manner ſtupified her ſenſes, and ſunk her once-charming ſpirits into a ſtate of nervous debility, while her fine figure was reduced to a mere ſkeleton.

She neither ſought nor would accept pecuniary aſſiſtance, which the injured general

ral would have gladly offered, but lived on the ſale of her clothes and a few trinkets, (having ſent back the family jewels,) waiting, with a broken heart, the moment that would give to the world the offſpring of guilt, the pledge of ſorrow! having removed herſelf to very private and humble lodgings in an obſcure part of the city.

In the mean time the proſecution was carried on againſt the gallant captain with the utmoſt ſeverity; the damages laid were ten thouſand pounds; but the jury, as is cuſtomary, conſidering the circumſtances of the delinquent, lowered it to one thouſand, and his body was ſoon after ſeized and conveyed to priſon for that ſum.

Mr. Melmoth felt all the indignation with which a vitiated conduct could fill an honeſt heart; but, the principal and moſt heinous parts of the ſeduction being concealed from him, he was, at length, after numberleſs ſollicitations, prevailed on to intereſt himſelf in the liberation of Captain Gorget, before the reigment, to which he belonged, embarked; his mother's father and firſt huſband

band having been members for the county ſeveral ſeſſions.

His caſe, ſimply as a young man, who had ſuffered his paſſions to exceed his prudence, was laid before the magiſtrates at the aſſize, and a ſubſcription opened by Mr. Melmoth, with a donation of one hundred guineas, which was ſo liberally followed, as to raiſe the damages given to the general. He, however, thirſted not after money; diſappointed of the revenge, in which he hoped to be gratified by the perpetual impriſonment of the culprit, he ordered his attorney to pay the whole ſum recovered to a public charity.

The captain, by thoſe means freed from his confinement, was enabled to wing his flight to regions leſs unpropitious to the free indulgence of the paſſions. There, uninfluenced by the example of humanity in others, a ſtranger to the practice of it himſelf, unreſtrained by the laws of a Chriſtian people, and unawed by the fear of detection, he gave a looſe to the exceſſes of his nature, and, adding avarice to the black catalogue

talogue of his vices, became the terror of the inhabitants of the Eaſt. Cruelty and carnage were called bravery and juſtice and an unbounded greedineſs for their riches bore the reſpectable name of prudence.—His fame as a commander reached the country he had diſgraced, and his coffers filled beyond his hopes.

With the accumulation of riches his deſire for them increaſed: at length, it being whiſpered that now, there being very little wealth more in thoſe hapleſs regions, in proportion to the rapacity of its various claimants, and that, the country being very near depopulated, ſome inquiry might poſſibly be made into the merits of the Aſiatic plunderers by thoſe who were excluded from any ſhare in the golden fleece, he prudently remitted his fortune, and returned himſelf to England, after twenty-ſix years reſidence in India, with preciſely the ſame principles, and the ſame diſpoſition, (though in far different circumſtances,) in which he had left it.

With

With a conſtitution debilitated by the heat of the climate he had ſo long lived in, as well as the exceſſes in which he had indulged his favourite vices, he was ſtill curſed with the inclinations to evil. Vanity and folly marked his ſteps; nor could his hollow eyes and grey hairs, which ſpoke a language all but himſelf believed, leave a doubt that his days of intrigue were paſſed and gone.—But who will ſpeak the language of truth to a man who knows not the end of his riches?—Pitiable Gorget!—There were yet thoſe that told him he was irreſiſtible; and, ſtill more pitiable, he believed them!—No public place but his haggard countenance was exhibited in! No beauty paſſed without throwing him into affected tranſports! and he ever provoked the riſible faculties, by diſcovering, in ſome fond ſally of vanity or other, he perſuaded himſelf he was making conqueſts, where, in fact, he was an antidote.

I will not leave this portrait, without informing my reader, the unhappy Mrs. Summers was releaſed from all her cares in the hour

hour of child-birth, leaving her infant-ſon in the hands of ſtrangers, who, ignorant of the real name or connections, after ſome little time carried him to the officers of the pariſh, where he was brought up, and, at the uſual time, bound apprentice to a working mechanic.

CHAPTER XII.

The Visit.

WHEN Colonel Gorget arrived in England, he was entirely without any of thoſe troubleſome ties of blood which look with expectation on Aſiatic accumulations; but there were claims his pride would not ſuffer him to paſs over, becauſe the memory of old times would be revived by others in proportion to his own forgetfulneſs; this he was too cunning not to know, and he had, with ſecret exultation, anticipated the manner in which he propoſed returning Mr. Melmoth's favours, whoſe frequent refuſals to anſwer his extravagant demands he determined to puniſh by his own oſtentatious generoſity; but, long before he could return to England, Mr. Melmoth had been called to receive the reward of his benevolent

lent actions from the Being who delights in charity.

His children, however, were living, and the colonel condeſcended to aſſure them of his friendſhip and protection, of which he ſent them earneſts in very valuable preſents, the produce of the land of plunder; but he was in no hurry to proceed any farther in the debt of gratitude, and ſecretly curſed the obligation he was under of receiving and anſwering their letters, which, as they abounded in profeſſions of eſteem and friendſhip, called for a return of the ſame nature.

But though, Colonel Gorget was not troubled with family claims, he ſoon had acquaintances enough ready to court his notice, to flatter his pride, and to make their advantage of his vaſt riches. To the diſcredit of our nobility, there were ſome among thoſe whom profligacy and imprudence had reduced to the mean taſk of preying on the follies of their inferiors. Colonel Gorget retained his lip-deep charity, but his purſe, which opened voluntarily

rily to the claims of indigent quality, as voluntarily cloſed againſt the pleas of calamity. It was fortunate for him he was a ſober man, and he was too wary to play: to thoſe two circumſtances it was that he owed the retaining his dear-bought wealth, ſince it would very well afford the draughts frequently made on it by way of loan to his friends; and, while he continued that convenient mode, he had the honour of having my lord this, and the earl of that, ſtop at his door, of being received at their houſes, and admitted into the parties of their female connections.

He purchaſed a magnificent houſe, which was adorned with all the trappings of the Eaſt, and finiſhed quite in the nabob ſtyle; and Bath being recommended as ſalutary to the diſorders he had contracted in India, another was bought there, which outdid any thing in that elegant ſeat of diſſipation. His carriages were ſuperb, his ſervants numerous, his liveries gaudy, and there wanted but one thing to complete his ſuite. A man of faſhion was nothing without a miſtreſs;

treſs; the poor colonel wanted only paſſions to be as great a libertine as the greateſt, but his delight was to obſerve the appearance of both. Two of his noble friends recommended each a prodigious fine creature; the colonel, to diſpleaſe neither, took both, one to do the honours of his town reſidence, the other to figure at his Bath villa.

The ladies were both fine women, and quite the faſhion; they were diſtractedly fond of the dear man, whoſe money they condeſcended to ſpend, and the only motive they had to accept his eſtabliſhment was the paſſion they felt for him; they had, indeed, qualities not very common to thoſe who love. No jealouſy interrupted the tranquility of his moments, they were in perfect unity with each other; perhaps the colonel's ill health, which, as he affirmed, prevented his indulging himſelf in the rapture of their embraces, might make them eaſy with reſpect to his perſonal favours, and, as to his pecuniary ones, he was magnificent to each.

The

The truth was, he thought his reputation, as a man of gallantry, could not be ſupported unleſs a little libertiniſm were added to it, and, in that caſe, two miſtreſſes were indiſpenſable appendages to his eſtabliſhment; but, as to inclination for either of the fair ladies ſo honoured, he had none. Sated with the full enjoyment of all that money could purchaſe, it required uncommon attractions to call forth the latent, and almoſt extinguiſhed, ſparks of deſire in his conſtitution; yet, though no longer intereſted in its effects, he could not help making flaming love to every woman he was in company with. When no better offered, Abigails ſufficed, and then a trifling preſent terminated the amour. He had eſtabliſhed both his houſes; gave entertainments, ſhewed his affluence, and exhibited his riches. He had been the ſubject of newſpapers and private converſation; he had purchaſed a borough, and bought off his petitioning opponent; he had taken his ſeat in the ſenate, and made a ſpeech there, which called forth the civility and attention

of

of the miniſter; when, the houſe breaking up, and the town beginning to be deſerted by his noble friends, the viſit he had promiſed the Melmoths recurred to his memory.

He had flattered theſe people they ſhould be heirs to his immenſe fortune; they were, therefore, continually urging him to honour them with his preſence, and, as he could not well be off, though he heartily wiſhed them in the Black-ſea, (a favourite expreſſion with him,) he reſolved on taking a round to viſit them, and thoſe people who yet lived, and were his friends in the ſubſcription-affair, to ſcatter ſome looſe caſh among them, and drop their acquaintance.

He took Bath in his way, where, having enjoyed the ſociety (which he ſecretly hated) of his divine ſultana for ſome little time, and found benefit from bathing, he ſet out for Mr. Melmoth's, as chief of that family, having apprized them of his intention in the middle of June.

The houſe, the lady, her children, and family, were all ſet out to the beſt advan-

tage, out of reſpect to a viſitor from whom their expectations were ſo great. Their expreſſions of joy at the honour he did them were ſincere, and their deſire to render his viſit agreeable could only be equalled by the profeſſions of regard, friendſhip, and affection, of their gueſt, who praiſed their fare, approved their ſituation, and appeared, as was his cuſtom, in raptures with the lady.

After dinner, Mrs. Barlow, Eliza Melmoth, Anna, the youngeſt child, and her maid, made their appearance with the deſert.

It is, perhaps, difficult to conceive any thing more bloomingly attractive than our heroine at this period: ſhe was juſt turned of fourteen, tall of her age, elegantly formed; her face, beſides being regularly beautiful, had in it a peculiar ſweetneſs and animation that were ſure to ſtrike the eye, and in hearts, where any of the graces that adorned her's exiſted, to leave a prejudice in her favour: ſhe had not yet reſigned her white frock; and her hair, which grew in the

the moſt luxuriant profuſion, hung down in natural ringlets to her waiſt.

To eyes accuſtomed to behold faces where beauty had no trace, or where the put-on could hardly be diſtinguiſhed from the charms of nature, no wonder this fine young girl appeared divine. He had been tired out with the attacks of thoſe beauties, whoſe undaunted eyes and bluſhleſs cheeks demanded his adoration; imagination was palled with their advances, and the heart recoiled from a captivity which had not the novelty of modeſt aſſurance to recommend it. But here his vitiated appetite, fired at the ſight of beauty and innocence in the irreſiſtible garb of modeſty, to deſtroy that ſerenity of countenance, to rob thoſe eyes of their downcaſt charms, to tear from her cheeks their bluſhing honours, in fine, to poſſeſs ſo beautiful, ſo innocent, a creature, ſtruck him, the moment he beheld her, as the *ſummum* of human bliſs, but, whether in a comeatable ſituation or not, it was impoſſible yet for him to determine.

Maſter of every diſguiſe of the human heart, he concealed his admiration, and, under pretence of laviſhing his careſſes on the little Eliza, ſtifled emotions to which he had long been a ſtranger.

Mrs. Melmoth's maternal feelings were highly gratified by his conduct; ſhe exulted in the happy preſage his fondneſs for her daughter gave of his future generoſity to her. He informed himſelf of the progreſs the child had made in her education, and inquired whether ſhe meant to ſend her to ſchool, if ſo, he would pay her penſion. Mr. Melmoth anſwered that he had a general diſlike to that mode of educating young ladies; that they had a very reſpectable perſon, who had done great honour to herſelf in the improvement of the young lady he now ſaw, and whoſe accompliſhments, as well as the whole turn of her mind and behaviour, were the beſt evidence of the utility of the method they had adopted of bringing up their children.

Anna was now called out, her works were exhibited, her drawings admired, and ſome

ſome trifles ſhe had been ſo fortunate as to hit off in poetry, at which Mr. Melmoth was much pleaſed, produced. She was commanded to ſing and play;—heaven and earth! were it in nature to be leſs than melted! Her execution was really above her years or the inſtructions ſhe had received, and her voice was ſoftneſs and melody itſelf.

The enamoured colonel was profuſe in his compliments. Mrs. Melmoth, pleaſed at her exertions, and charmed at the pleaſure expreſſed by her gueſt, was in the beſt ſpirits in the world: ſhe repeated Anna's hiſtory with a view of entertaining him, and, perhaps, a little to impreſs him with an idea of her own humanity.—This was indeed ſpeaking to his ſoul; he heard with a joy, (deep as was his faculty for diſſimulation,) he could with difficulty conceal, the orphan ſtate of his lovely conquereſs. He retired early under pretence of fatigue, but, in reality, to ruminate on the means moſt likely to put him in poſſeſſion of the charming Anna.

His plan was now altered; it would be impoſſible for him to compaſs his wiſhes in the ſhort ſpace he had allotted for this viſit at the Lodge. He curſed Mrs. Melmoth's ſtupidity, nauſeated her brats, and execrated a thouſand times, the neceſſity he ſhould be under of bearing with them: but how to enſnare his young prize was his chief care in caſes where vengeance could be taken. General Summers's affair was always in his mind, it had taught him a leſſon of caution he had never forgotten; but this girl was nobody, ſhe was deſtitute of natural friends; no reſentful father, no avenging brother, no injured huſband, had he now to fear; and, as to Mr. Melmoth, did he not flatter himſelf, nay, had he not been flattered, with hopes of being his heir! Would he then dare to interfere, if he ſhould diſcover it, after he had her in poſſeſſion; and, before, he reſolved to act with ſuch reſerve as to elude all fear of detection.

This point ſettled, he gave a looſe to his ſanguine hopes; he would devote himſelf to

to this dear innocent; he would give up the world for her; he wiſhed, indeed, he had not been ſo precipitate in the choice of his miſtreſſes; but an annuity would ſatisfy them! How he ſhould be envied! True ſhe was young, but that was a fault every day would mend. He ſaw the folly of expecting happineſs in a crowd; Anna ſhould be his home: with thoſe ideas it was impoſſible for him to ſleep.

At breakfaſt next morning, his friendſhip for Mr. Melmoth, his regard for his lady, and his fondneſs for their children, had made ſo rapid a progreſs in his affections, he found it impoſſible to tear himſelf away from them ſo ſoon as he intended; inſtead of a couple of days he would make it a couple of weeks.

This intimation was received with pleaſure, and their attention redoubled; but tireſome were the morning and tedious the dinner, ſince wholly concealed from his ſight was all in which his eyes delighted. The afternoon returned with rapture; he again beheld his intended miſtreſs more daz-

zlingly beautiful, more inchantingly lovely, than before. Thus paſſed day after day till the fortnight had elapſed; and, ſtill growing fonder of his friends, the colonel could not leave Melmoth-Lodge; yet he had not advanced a ſingle ſtep in his grand deſign; at length he reſolved to try the diſpoſition of the governeſs, and ſeized every opportunity of praiſing her method with Miſs Melmoth, of congratulating the parents on ſo great an acquiſition, and paying her the higheſt compliments; but not a word of Anna.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

An old-faſhioned Wedding.

WITH theſe reſolutions the colonel at laſt found, from the information of his ſervant, that Anna was, as well as her governeſs, an early riſer, and that one hour, before the family were aſſembled, was generally ſpent by them at the harpſichord; he took ſuch advantage of his intelligence that, at the next leſſon, they were ſurpriſed at his entrance (by *accident)* into the room they were in. A deep bluſh of timid modeſty tinged the cheeks of our heroine, nor were thoſe of Mrs. Barlow free from a glow;—they would have retired,—but the colonel, with all the ſoftneſs and good-nature his very pliable features could aſſume, begged he might not be deprived of

ſo lovely a ſight as beauty in bloom inſtructing beauty in the bud.

Mrs. Barlow was plain in her perſon, and on the wrong ſide of forty; from the character I have before given her the reader will do her the juſtice in believing the all-ſufficient colonel, in his fulſome compliment, went a great way towards outwitting himſelf; which was certainly the caſe, notwithſtanding it was accompanied with an elegant card-purſe, containing ten guineas, put with great politeneſs into her hand; but, obſerving the ſurpriſe in her countenance indicated nothing in favour of his views, (that cold diſtruſt, on the reverſe, and the thankleſs civility, with which ſhe accepted his purſe, pretty plainly ſpoke how little it obliged her,) he added, with a graver tone of voice, "I mean it, madam, as an ac-"knowledgement of my gratitude for the "care you take of my Eliza."

A ſervant, at this moment, entered to ſpeak to Mrs. Barlow; then, (his whole heart in his eyes,) in a low voice, he entreated Anna to favour him with one leſſon; free,

free, equally from guile and ſuſpicion, ſhe was preparing to obey him, when Mrs. Barlow told her Mrs. Melmoth was up.—The colonel begged for five minutes;—the obſtinate governeſs would not grant one.—"It "was her cuſtom to attend Mrs. Melmoth "as ſoon as ſhe aroſe."—He was ſure "that lady would pardon Miſs for not ac- "companying her, if ſhe mentioned it as "his requeſt."—"Sir," returned Mrs. Barlow, with a look and voice which implied reſolution on one hand and ſuſpicion on the other, "if you make the requeſt to "Mrs. Melmoth yourſelf, and ſhe com- "plies, I muſt acquieſce; but, at preſent, "you muſt excuſe her."—The whole of this lady's conduct and behaviour convinced him he muſt change his attack and be more on his guard: it was plain the old lady was clearer-ſighted than he wiſhed her, and proof (which was to him a miracle) againſt gold: but for her the complying little angel would have ſtaid with him; a curſe, which this thought ſent from his heart before it reached his lips, was changed to a

ſmile, and, with a polite bow, he led Mrs. Barlow to the door, wiſhing her good morning.

Mrs. Barlow had ſeen, in the different families where ſhe had ſerved, a good deal of what is called life: ſhe was marked very much with the ſmall-pox, which cruel diſorder had greatly altered a beautiful ſet of features, it had indeed left her nothing but her eyes and teeth, which were both very fine; her manners were by moſt people thought reſerved; from thoſe circumſtances ſhe had eſcaped much temptation to evil herſelf, but ſhe therefore had the more leiſure to look into the actions of others, and the unintereſting ſameneſs of her own life rendered the viciſſitudes of people, with whom ſhe was connected, the more obſervable.

The colonel's character was no leſs an object of alarm than the charms of her pupil, whom ſhe loved with an affection truly maternal; ſhe had perceived the corrected tranſports, the eager looks, the niggard approbation, of the former, and trembled for the

the fate of the latter, over whom ſhe ſo ſtrictly watched, and whoſe ſteps ſhe ſo cloſely followed, that another fortnight paſſed without forwarding the colonel's honourable ſcheme; he found he was ſuſpected, and fervently did he wiſh he had this Argus for one hour in the hallowed land of indulgence, or that he could venture at the ſame means of quieting her, which, in India, would have excited no inquiry. But the law (rude, inconvenient, Engliſh law,) was the dread and hatred of his ſoul; his patience was nearly exhauſted, when an event happened whichg ave new life to his wiſhes; —this was the marriage of Mrs. Barlow, who had been addreſſed, when in her nineteenth year ſhe waited on a lady at Oxford, by a Welſh parſon. Her lover's paſſion had not only ſurvived the loſs of her beauty, but had been cheriſhed with unremitting conſtancy twenty-three years, waiting with hope and patience till it was in her power to ſave, and his to obtain, ſomething like a decent ſubſiſtence.

Mr.

Mr. Manſel, with this view, had ſerved ſeveral Welſh curacies, with his eye on a living Sir William Edwin (a baronet, who, on particular occaſions, did him the honour of calling him couſin) promiſed him. The moment the incumbent died he poſted to London, where his patron then was, to remind him of his promiſe; Sir William was as good as his word; and the happy parſon having obtained the living, he took Somerſetſhire in his way down, in order to carry his long-affianced and beloved bride home with him.

Mrs. Melmoth heard, with a viſible concern, the neceſſity ſhe was under of parting with ſo valuable a woman; Mr. Melmoth proteſted her fellow was not to be procured at any rate; but their good friend, the colonel, found, in ſome degree, means to reconcile the lady to that event, by obſerving ſhe might be a decent kind of woman enough, he believed ſhe was a little preciſe or ſo, but that did not ſignify, ſhe might be a very proper body to ſuperintend the bringing up of Anna Dalton, but really

Mrs.

Mrs. Melmoth muſt excuſe him if he made diſtinctions. Eliza Melmoth, if ſhe behaved well, would move in a higher ſphere of life; he, for his part, who (again they muſt forgive him) was uſed to the converſation and company of the firſt people, knew there were many things which a young woman of faſhion ought to learn; theſe that woman was totally ignorant of, French in particular. Did ever any body hear of an Engliſh governeſs being engaged where a French one could be procured!

Here was a ſpeech directly to the heart of the fond mother; joy and happineſs were in the ſound; Eliza Melmoth would be heireſs to Colonel Gorget, and a match for a duke. From that moment all the uſeful part of the child's education was laid aſide: the idea of riches ſhe was to inherit ſwallowed up her mother's reluctance at parting with the amiable, the ſenſible, the modeſt, Mrs. Barlow; it riveted her confidence in the colonel; and inquiries were directly ſet on foot for a French governeſs.

Mrs.

Mrs. Barlow having, therefore, now a handſome opportunity of accepting the offer of Mr. Manſel, and complying with his ardent requeſt of going with him to Wales, as her ſervices could not only be diſpenſed with, but were in fact no longer wanted, a day was fixed for their marriage at the pariſh-church, when Mr. Melmoth was ſo good as to ſtand father to the bride, and gave an elegant dinner on the occaſion. In the mean time all her leiſure was ſpent in repeating the inſtructions her heart dictated to Anna, whoſe parting with her governeſs was the firſt real trouble ſhe had yet known; ſhe loved, and was beloved by, Mrs. Barlow with the affection moſt likely to ſtand the teſt of time or any change of circumſtance, as it was founded on the mutual approbation and eſteem of each other's principles: the maternal love and tenderneſs, which had accompanied all the valuable leſſons of the worthy governeſs, were repaid by the lovely pupil with the moſt dutiful and affectionate regard; no taſk was difficult, or entered on with reluctance, convinced,

convinced, as ſhe was, that her own good was the ultimate object in view.

Since the increaſe in the family of her benefactors, Mrs. Barlow, foreſeeing the ſun of Anna's favour was ſetting, had been long fortifying her mind againſt poſſible, if not probable, events; ſhe had been arming her with patience, and conjuring her to perſevere in innocence and integrity now that ſhe was on the eve of leaving her, and leaving her too in a ſituation, which, though it appeared dangerous to her, ſhe was not juſtified in mentioning, ſince her own ſurmiſes were her only authority; ſhe might be wrong;—ſhe might injure the colonel:—but her love for Anna rendered her anxious: it was not, indeed, till the inſtant of ſeparation ſhe knew how neceſſary to her happineſs this dear girl was; gladly would ſhe have taken her wholly from Mrs. Melmoth; but the bare mention of ſuch a thing ſhe knew would be taken ill, and ſhe had too high a ſenſe of gratitude to offer an affront where ſhe acknowledged herſelf much obliged: nothing was therefore in her power but

but to enforce by admonitions (where tears were blended with inſtructions) thoſe leſſons of virtue and propriety which had been the ſubject of their eight years ſtudies: ſhe begged that their correſpondence might be regular and unreſerved; and told her, with an earneſtneſs in which truth and love were equally viſible, ſhe would always find a home with her, and obliged her to promiſe, if any unforeſeen event ſhould occaſion her, either from neceſſity or choice, to quit the Lodge, ſhe would, inſtead of returning to the Daltons, come by way of Briſtol to her, as that gentleman's family was large, and ſhe would be there receiving obligations, when, in favouring Mr. Manſel and herſelf with her company, ſhe would, by adding ſo conſiderable to their happineſs, confer it on them. The poor weeping Anna felt as if ſhe was going to be annihilated; ſhe promiſed to obſerve, with the moſt ſacred regard, the minuteſt thing her dear firiend enjoined her, and to treaſure in her memory the invaluable inſtructions ſhe had received from her.

Their

Their parting was accompanied with floods of tears, and their affectionate adieus infected the whole houſe. With her eyes did Anna follow the chaiſe ;and when it was no longer in ſight, ſhe fell ſenſeleſs into the arms of one of the maids, who, with all the ſervants, had followed to the gate, with their good wiſhes and prayers, a woman, whoſe inoffenſive temper had, for the long time ſhe lived at the Lodge, preſerved her from enemies, while the juſtice, candour and humanity, of her diſpoſition had made her many friends.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Contraſt.

MRS. Melmoth's inquiries after a French governeſs, on which occaſion ſhe had written to London, were anſwered in two days, before the departure of Mrs. Barlow, by the application of a perſon who was accidentally within twelve miles of the Lodge.

A lady of high rank and quality was on a viſit at a quondam friend's in Somerſetſhire: ſhe was there attended with a French gentlewoman, who had been long enough about her ladyſhip's perſon to be in poſſeſſion of ſome few anecdotes, (perfectly innocent no doubt,) which gave her, as ſhe preſumed, a title to a greater degree of familiarity than ſat quite eaſy on her lady, who, however, did not find it convenient

to

to reprehend or diſcharge her, but wanted not inclination to do both. It is probable mademoiſelle, as ſhe was called, (who was not deficient in the ſpecies of low cunning, ſome people chooſe to dignify with the name of wit,) might perceive that ſhe was more feared than valued, and therefore took this opportunity of providing for herſelf in a country gentleman's family, or, that ſhe might fear, her lady, who was above ſetting any great value on character, would grow weary of the trammels her inſolence now made her wear.

Whatever were her motives, ſhe inſtantly applied for a recommendation from Lady Waldron to Mrs. Melmoth, aſſigning ill-health as her only reaſon for her wiſh to part with ſo good and ſo amiable a lady. London air nor London hours agreed with her; the country ſhe hoped would be of ſervice to her; but, wherever ſhe was, it was impoſſible for her to forego her reſpect and veneration for her dear lady, who, on her ſide, declared nothing on earth ſhould prevail on her to part with ſo valuable a dependent,

pendant, but her regard for her conſtitution, and wiſh to forward her intereſt.—Mademoiſelle was therefore diſpatched in Lord Bury's chariot to Melmoth-Lodge with the following card:

"Lady Waldron's compliments wait on "Mrs. Melmoth, would certainly have had "the honour of paying her reſpects to her "at the Lodge had ſhe not been confined "with a nervous head-ache.

"Lady Waldron, hearing Mrs. M. is in "want of a French governeſs for the Miſs "Melmoths, takes the liberty of recommending Mademoiſelle Frajan as the "moſt proper perſon in the world for ſuch "a truſt.—Lady Waldron will be anſwerable in every reſpect for her character and "abilities."

Colonel Gorget and his two friends were in the ſaloon taking their tea when this important meſſage arrived.

"Heavens!" cried the colonel, "the "divine Lady Waldron in the neighbourhood and I not at her feet!—A few "years back ſhe would have been highly

"piqued

" piqued at ſuch neglect; upon my ſoul I " was fond of that woman;—but let us " ſee her card;—ha! the ſame pretty pen- " woman! and her ſtyle too——"

" Is, no doubt, very good," interrupted Mr. Melmoth, " but, upon my word, my " dear," (turning to Mrs. Melmoth,) " I " cannot think Lady Waldron's recom- " mendation an eligible one for the ſort of " perſon you want."

Mr. Melmoth, you aſtoniſh me," an ſwered the colonel in warmth, " are you " really ſo ignorant of what is due to peo- " ple of diſtinction, as to doubt (notwith- " ſtanding the little gallantries of her la- " dyſhip's life) any perſon would, or, in- " deed, could, object to her recommen- " dation!—Mrs. Melmoth, ſee the lady " by all means!"

Mr. Melmoth would have offered a negative, but his circumſtances were ſo involved, and his expectations ſo great from his generous friend, that, contrary to his own judgment, (which at all times was good,) he remained a ſilent, unapproving, ſpecta-

tor,

tor, while mademoiſelle was admitted, examined, hired, and returned with the following card:

" Colonel Gorget's very beſt compli-
" ments to Lady Waldron, begs leave to
" return a thouſand thanks for the honour
" her ladyſhip conferred on his friend,
" Mrs. Melmoth, who is happy to have
" any perſon under her roof that has at-
" tended on the charming Lady Wal-
" dron.

" The colonel will have the honour of
" paying his devoirs to Lady W. and
" Lord Bury as ſoon as convenient to
" them."

It will, I preſume, be aſked why Mrs. Melmoth herſelf did not anſwer Lady Waldron's card—I have told my readers that Colonel Gorget was, according to his own account, acquainted with the firſt men, as well as the fineſt women, in the kingdom; but I did not pledge myſelf for the veracity of that aſſertion. The truth is, excepting thoſe hungry and profligate peers who condeſcended to borrow his money, which, I before

before obſerved, he would freely lend to a peer, and the family to whoſe father he owed all his good fortune, he was as little known as reſpected; and, as to Lady Waldron, he had really never ſeen her but in public: nevertheleſs quality acquaintance was his greateſt ambition, and, not being troubled with the modeſt diffidence that keeps merit at a diſtance, or, when it is ſuffered to approach, prevents the diſplay of its claims to patronage, he ſeized, with undaunted aſſurance, on this occaſion to introduce himſelf; he did not, however, take the ſenſe of his friends on the contents of the card to the lady; he felt the ſuperiority of Mr. Melmoth's judgment and underſtanding too forcibly to ſuffer him to inſpect into ſo flimſy an artifice. As to matter of cuſtom and politeneſs, were they not poor, and was not he rich? and were they not in too much diſtreſs to riſk offending a man in whoſe power it was to be their friend? Certainly Mr. Melmoth felt himſelf hurt; and it was not till he had heard a great deal more, from his wife, of bearing, and

forbearing, he could quite resume his good humour; but that was a mere bagatelle.

The next day brought the French governess;—the apartments were now to undergo an entire alteration;—the little library, where all the ideas of Anna were formed, was no more;—mademoiselle must have a room to herself.—At this our heroine did not repine as she then slept with Eliza; but soon had she sufficient reason to regret her lost friend, her respected companion. Every successive hour in her time had its employments or amusements that contributed either to health or improvement; the hours, appropriated to useful or ornamental needle-work, were now loitered away from trifle to trifle, or actually sunk in direct idleness; and those most delightfully filled by reading some of the best English authors, in which happy periods they were frequently honoured with the company of Mr. Melmoth, who had the goodness to guide her judgment and direct her taste, now lost in an illiterate commencement of the

the French language, which Anna could not comprehend, nor would attend to. In fine, ſhe deſpiſed the inſtructreſs, and could not profit by her leſſons. Ignorant, haughty, and ill-bred; commanding, with an air of inſolent pride, thoſe, who not being uſed to ſuch manners, ſcorned to obey; mademoiſelle began her career at Melmoth-Lodge with the diſlike of all its natural inhabitants; the colonel, indeed, was charmed with her; as to the children, it was enough to ſay "mademoiſelle was coming" to frighten them into any thing.

This reſpectable perſon, for whoſe character a lady of faſhion was anſwerable, was in her thirtieth year; had been handſome; was dirty in her perſon; immoral in her diſcourſe; ignorant of the refinements of her own language, and too volatile to learn with propriety that of the country ſhe found it convenient to reſide in; her ſpeech was a mixed jargon of broken Engliſh and vulgar French; ſhe wore a vaſt deal of rouge, took ſnuff, loved intrigue, and hated work. Such was the perſon engaged to ſupply the

place of Mrs. Barlow, at Melmoth-Lodge, under the auſpices of Colonel Gorget.

CHAPTER XV.

Family Anecdotes.

THE gallant colonel was now in his element; he was waiting a mandate from Lady Waldron; he was ogling and ſighing at the Frenchwoman, and he felt his deſires increaſe every moment for the innocent victim he had marked for his own.

He had propoſed two days ſtay at the Lodge; as many months were now elapſed, and he ſpoke not of departing.

Mrs.

Mrs. Aſhby and Mrs. Mandeville, two ſiſters of Mr. Melmoth, were in impatient expectation of the time he would confer the ſame honour on them; and, anxiouſly jealous of a partiality ſo marked, more than half-repented giving up Mrs. Melmoth's acquaintance, as they had, by that means, ſhut themſelves out of the way of paying their court for the loaves and fiſhes.

They were continually ſending him invitations, tireſome enough, as he could not prevail on himſelf to leave the Lodge till he had viſited Lady Waldron, made a conqueſt of mademoiſelle, and ſecured Anna; but, it at laſt ſtruck him, that, the diſtance being ſo ſmall, he might occaſionally viſit thoſe ladies without remitting his attention to either of the points he wiſhed to keep in view; indeed, he now recollected it as an odd circumſtance, which had before eſcaped his obſervation, that neither of Mr. Melmoth's ſiſters had been to pay their perſonal reſpects to him there; this was a matter as unintelligible to his hoſts as himſelf; the family-connexion had been declined, on the

part of thoſe ladies, with little ceremony and leſs good nature; and, whenever they met by accident, it was with ſuch ſtiff contempt on one ſide, and careleſs indifference on the other, that an *éclairciſſement* was the laſt thing likely to take place.

Mr. Melmoth, in juſtice to himſelf and family, could not help relating, with ſome acrimony, the unprovoked caprice of his relations, on being queſtioned on that head by his friend.

The colonel expreſſed both grief and ſurpriſe to hear that his charming, his amiable, friend, Mrs. Melmoth, had been ſo impolitely uſed.

He ſuppoſed, her huſband's having ſo nobly preferred happineſs to riches, in his choice of her, to be the cauſe of her being treated with ſuch diſreſpect.

The lady bluſhed at this compliment, which rather mortified than flattered her; but anſwered coolly, if that were the caſe, ſhe preſumed the diſlike of Mr. Melmoth's relations would have been ſhewn at the time of their marriage; on the contrary, the

they had lived with great harmony four years.

Well, it was aſtoniſhing! the colonel could not account for it; but, however, he would take a ride to Mrs. Aſhby's; he would know the cauſe; and did aſſure them, if the ſiſters did not well acquit themſelves, or make proper advances towards a re-union in the family, they ſhould be equal ſtrangers to his friendſhip and favour.

Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth could have diſpenſed with this interference; they felt no regret at being deprived of the ſociety of relations, between whom and themſelves there exiſted neither affection nor eſteem; but the apparent candour and good nature of the motive called for thanks and acknowledgments; yet, though they did not refuſe, neither did they court, the good offices of their officious friend on an occaſion about which they were perfectly indifferent.

However, the following morning Colonel Gorget's ſervant was ſent with the joy-

ful news, that his maſter would condeſcend to dine with Mrs. Aſhby next day, and requeſted Mrs. Mandeville would be of the party.

The ladies were in raptures at the ſight of their dear and honoured friend; they had been broken-hearted at his being ſo near ſuch a length of time without allowing them to pay their duty; and Caroline Aſhby was not a little mortified that her young couſins had ſo much better fortune than herſelf, in the opportunity, his reſidence at the Lodge gave them, of attracting the honour of his notice.

The colonel, on his part, was all affection and politeneſs; he had ſuffered very much in depriving himſelf ſo long of the happineſs he now enjoyed; he was charmed with the ladies, and delighted with Miſs Caroline; and, notwithſtanding what I have ſaid of the duplicity of his character, he was, in his profeſſions of friendſhip and regard, quite as ſincere as the ladies to whom he addreſſed them were in theirs.

After

After dinner Miſs Aſhby was called to her inſtrument.—She was a tall coarſe girl of ſixteen, who was ſo partially approved by the mother, and whoſe every action ſo charmed, that, when once the delightful theme of her perfections was ſtarted, it engroſſed her whole attention.

"Come, Caroline, let the colonel hear "my favourite ſong.

"Play your new leſſon.

"Now, my dear, the rondeau."

With a conceited air, and unbluſhing countenance, Caroline obeyed.—Deſtitute of taſte, ear, voice, or judgment, and free from the conſtraint of timid modeſty, the young lady entertained their gueſt: no room indeed was left for his requeſts; the fond ill-judging mother ſtill continuing her plaudits, and ſtill calling forth the fancied attractions of her darling daughter, not knowing that, inſtead of gratifying, ſhe was diſguſting, the perſon it was ſo much her wiſh to pleaſe.

The contraſt, between the manners, as well as perſon, of the proſperous Caroline

Aſhby and the poor orphaned Anna, was indeed too ſtriking not to redouble the value of the one, in his eſtimation, as he felt tired and diſguſted with the other.

It was in vain he ſought an opportunity of entering on the ſubject of the coolneſs that ſubſiſted in the family; Miſs Aſhby had ſtill ſome charming thing to amuſe him with, till, after ſhifting his ſeat ſeveral times, and betraying every token of reſtleſſneſs, he was obliged to break in, on what he vowed was the harmony of the ſpheres, to beg an hour's ſerious converſation; but miſs was ſtill deſired to keep her ſeat, as Mrs. Aſhby was ſure Colonel Gorget would wiſh to hear another ſong before he left them.

He then, with great apparent concern, inquired the reaſon ſo manifeſt a diſunion prevailed in ſo reſpectable a family.

A general ſimper overſpread the countenance of the ladies.

They ſhewed a reluctance to enter on the ſubject, which he was clever enough to perceive

ceive was affected, and that with expectation of being more closely urged.

After many evasions, and pretended backwardness to say any thing that could lessen their friend's good opinion of any part of the family, Mrs. Ashby took upon her to be spokeswoman.

She appealed to himself, whether, in the first instance, it must not be a great mortification to them to see their only brother, a young man, in possession of such a noble estate, and the last male of their family, free from incumbrances of any kind, throw himself away on a woman of neither birth nor fortune, the daughter of people of doubtful character, as she supposed he knew.

The colonel bowed his assent.

" However, when the thing was past re-
" cal, we thought it best to be on decent
" terms with them; but when, in the face
" of the whole country, she shamelessly
" brought her natural daughter here, dres-
" sing and educating her in a far superior
" style to what our children were dressed

" and educated in, ſquandering our dear fa-
" ther's fortune on her illegitimate off-
" ſpring,—it was too much; the honour of
" our family was concerned, as well as
" our own private feelings, in avoiding
" all intercourſe with them."

" What is this you ſay, Madam?" anſwered the colonel in the utmoſt aſtoniſhment; " Let me underſtand you,—her na-
" tural daughter!"

" Yes," returned Mrs. Aſhby, " that
" Anna, that pet, is her own child; ſhe
" was brought from London by an old
" ſervant of my father's, who received
" her from the people that nurſed her, and
" they told Dame Plunket, Mrs. Melmoth
" had at laſt prevailed on her huſband to
" take the brat. All the old ſervants
" (ſome of them born in the houſe) were
" diſcharged for preſuming to deliver their
" thoughts on ſo ſcandalous an affair.
" It is now no ſecret; every body in this
" country knows it, nor can ſhe be igno-
" rant that her infamy is diſcovered; but

" it

"it is no wonder ſhe wiſhes to conceal "it from you, ſir."

This was news indeed to Colonel Gorget; not that he believed a ſyllable of the affair as repreſented by Mrs. Aſhby. Mrs. Melmoth, at his firſt coming to the Lodge, related in ſuch an ingenuous, artleſs, manner, her accidentally meeting with the orphan ſhe protected, together with the name and place of abode of the perſon from whom ſhe took her, whoſe ſacred function was, as well as Mr. Melmoth's authority, a confirmation that placed beyond a poſſibility of doubt the truth of the ſtory; beſides Mr. Melmoth, although, as Dame Plunket ſaid, a mere ſap in worldly wiſdom, had too much honour as well as underſtanding to ſupport his wife in ſuch an atrocious impoſition; it was ſo eaſy to trace it to conviction if falſe, and no leſs to confirm it if true, that he heſitated not to decide, in his own mind, on the innocence of Mrs. Melmoth. He had, indeed, ſo thorough a knowledge of the world, and what it would do to carry a point, that

he

he made no doubt but this was a calumny, originating at firſt in the ſpirit of curioſity, and confirmed by that of ill-nature; but the matter now was, what uſe could be made of this piece of intelligence,—could it not be tortured ſo as to turn to the advancement of his grand deſign?—Mrs. Melmoth's favour was of conſequence to him juſt now; ſhould he, therefore, make a merit with her of vindicating her injured fame, and clearing her character from the unjuſt aſperſions it had ſuſtained? or would it not be better to reſerve this act of juſtice for ſome future occaſion?

Could he not by and by tell it in a manner that ſhould both alarm and diſtreſs her? and was it not probable, in that caſe, he might ſeize ſome favourable moment to induce her to diſcard the innocent cauſe of her diſquiet?

At all events he could at any time diſcloſe it as an act of kindneſs, or, if more convenient, as cauſe of quarrel, and an excuſe to break off the connection when it

was

was no longer neceſſary to be ſo partial to her, or ſo dotingly fond of her children.

At preſent, then, he reſolved to ſail with the ſtream.

After ſome moments profound ſilence, during which he turned in his mind the preceding arguments, attentively watched by the ladies, he raiſed his eyes to heaven, and, deeply ſighing, caſt them down again inſtantaneouſly without articulating a ſyllable.

Another pauſe raiſed the expectation of the company; and ſo prepared were they to coincide with the wiſdom of his opinion, that had he, as they pre-ſuppoſed he would have done, ſtood forth the champion of Mrs. Melmoth's honour, rather than riſque a difference in opinion with him, they would have given up the matter, notwithſtanding their rooted prejudices, and their warm regard to the credit and honour of their family.

But ſuch condeſcenſions were not likely to be demanded. The colonel ſolemnly addreſſed them:—

"Let

"Let us," ſaid he, "my ever dear "friends, where juſtice will permit it, leave "room for candour: let us believe you "may be miſinformed."

Encouraged beyond their hopes,—No; they aſſured him that was impoſſible; they were but too certain.

"Well, then," continued the mild benevolent man, "let us not know it; or, "if we muſt know it, let us (hoping the "poor woman may have ſeen her error, "and in compaſſion to the children ſhe "has by your brother) give the world an "example of charity and forgiveneſs in "our conduct."

If the reader has been uſed to converſe with Colonel Gorgets, (and he will find many of them on the theatre of the great world,) he will know that there are two ways of enforcing an argument; and that the ſame words, literally repeated, may ſerve for either.

Thus, to be looked upon as the peace-maker of the family, and to be eſteemed the friend of Mrs. Melmoth, were what the

the colonel choſe to expreſs in his words; but the manner of his uttering them made it pretty plain neither was in his meaning.

With the preſent inhabitants of the Lodge he was perfectly free from all apprehenſions of a diſcovery of the latent cauſe of his remaining there. Mrs. Melmoth was a good-natured, open-hearted, thoughtleſs, woman, whoſe boſom harboured no ſuſpicion of any kind; all ſhe had in view was paying court to the nabob for the ſake of her children.

The ſquire was, every moment he could ſteal off to his ſtudy, up to the ears in heroic poems, and, when preſent, more than half in the third heavens; as for the French governeſs, ſhe was almoſt a match for the colonel himſelf. Elated with his amorous advances, ſhe had, in her own ideas, laid a regular plan of defence and capitulation, and already rolled her vis-a-vis down St. James's Street, not giving way to Lady Waldron herſelf.

Anna, the treaſure for whom all his plans were laid, innocent and careleſs, thoughtleſs and unſuſpicious, was now wholly employed in finiſhing a muff for Mrs. Melmoth, romping with the children, or playing on the harpſichord, and placed her ſupreme delight in receiving a ſummons from Mr. Melmoth to his library, or writing to Mrs. Manſel, which ſhe never failed doing, or omitted informing her of every occurrence that happened; to this eaſy unſuſpecting circle it was not the intereſt of Colonel Gorget to make any addition.

Mrs. Aſhby, a widow and a coquet; Mrs. Mandeville, a ſtarched prude, and Caroline Aſhby, a pert, forward, inquiſitive, miſs, were not at all people he choſe to give an opportunity of obſerving on his actions.

It was therefore, at preſent, not convenient to him to bring about a reconciliation in the family, though he thought proper to preſerve the appearance of endeavouring to effect it.

When

When he parted with the ladies at Aſhby-Grove, he told them it was with infinite regret; and, though he could not but wiſh to meet them at the Lodge, yet he muſt own it was a delicate point, on which he could not determine, as it appeared, in the light the affair now ſtood, equally commendable whether they continued their reſerve in reſpect to their family, or whether they dropped it in regard to their brother; but he would give them his farther ſentiments when he had the honour of waiting on Mrs. Mandeville, which ſhould be in the enſuing week.

At his return to the Lodge, Colonel Gorget lamented the implacable temper of the ladies he had been with, made compariſons, in an indirect manner, between the gentle and ſweet temper of his amiable friend, and that of the violence and ſelf-ſufficiency of thoſe he had viſited; and, in conſequence of his unfavourable obſervations on thoſe ladies, he would no more think of dividing his time, but, while he

ſtaid

ſtaid in that part of the country, make his home at the Lodge.

I need not ſay Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth were very happy at this preference in the colonel, or that they expreſſed themſelves not more honoured than obliged, becauſe, though their circumſtances were ſo much deranged, it was the folly of the age, not the vices of it, which had found place in their diſpoſitions: they really felt his partiality as the higheſt obligation, and acknowledged it with as much gratitude.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Rapture.

COLONEL GORGET, now perfectly at eaſe in his outworks, ſeriouſly began his attacks on our young heroine. It was, I have informed my reader, Mrs. Barlow's cuſtom, from the time the muſic-maſter was diſcharged, to keep Anna to a regular practice of leſſons one hour every morning. The interruption, which alarmed the governeſs, induced her to change the place of practice; and, from the time the colonel intruded on them, they had made uſe of an old organ in an octagon temple, where formerly little concerts had been held. Anna, in obedience to Mrs. Manſel's injunctions, as well as to gratify her own taſte for muſic, continued her morning viſits to the temple: of this circumſtance an old valet, who, being

being as artful as his master, was the only servant who could stay any time in his service, informed the colonel; and he, the very first day after this intimation, under pretence of strolling round the gardens, surprised her in the middle of a lesson, which so entirely engrossed her attention, that he had sufficient leisure to examine and admire the various charms of a young creature, who was the emblem of youth, innocence, and beauty: but his emotions did not suffer him to enjoy long in silence so exquisite a feast. At first the surprise both alarmed and confused her; but he, throwing all the softness and polite respect into his manner he so well knew how to make sit easy on his features, begged a thousand pardons for the intrusion, and, with great earnestness, intreated he might not interrupt her; said he would instantly leave the place, if she required it, but should be for ever obliged by one song.

This request, in her idea, amounted to a command; she knew how exceedingly Mrs. Melmoth was interested in pleasing this

this gentleman, and, unapprehenſive of danger as unconſcious of guilt, with no other embarraſſment than at firſt proceeded from her natural diffidence, ſhe ſang and played.

The morning was one of the hotteſt in Auguſt; not a breath of air interrupted the melody of her voice, and the accompaniments were echoed from an adjacent grove. She aſtoniſhed and charmed the enraptured colonel in her warblings of "Fair Aurora," from Artaxerxes; another and another ſong was aſked, and granted; when, ſuddenly recollecting her dear companinon in this morning amuſement, ſhe made a quick tranſition from Seſtini's lively "*Non dubi-* "*ta*" to Linley's beautiful elegy of "I "ſing of the days that are gone."

He could hold no longer, no longer reſtrain the tranſports of a paſſion he ſecretly vowed no power ſhould prevent him from gratifying.—Catching her in his arms, he ſwore ſhe was more than mortal!—ſhe was divine!—and, raviſhing, from her hitherto-unpolluted lips, kiſſes, not leſs diſguſting

from

from his figure than frightful from his vehemence, for a moment deprived her of all power of reſiſtance; ſoon, however, (thoroughly terrified at his indecent violence,) her ſcreams rent the grove; but, loſt now to every idea except that of gratifying his hideous paſſion, he recollected not how far he was removed from that country where rape and murders are tolerated acts! deaf to her cries, unmoved by her youth and terror, he was proceeding to outrage, when the ſudden appearance of mademoiſelle took from him all active powers.

The trembling Anna eſcaped out of the temple, and, with inconceivable agility, ran into the nurſery, where ſhe fainted away.

The interview between Colonel Gorget and Frajan requires an abler pen than mine to do it juſtice; that lady was awakened much earlier than common by her own agreeable ideas. The gallant colonel had taken an opportunity of attributing to her charms his ſtay at the Lodge; the paſſion he felt for her he vowed would conſume him;

him; life was no life, it was a lingering living death, without the adorable Frajan. He added as many more brilliant things as could be crammed into a two-minutes ſtop, *en paſſant*, as he croſſed the hall; and, ſo delighted was ſhe with his homage to charms, which, to ſay the truth, were pretty well worn, that it was late before her delightful reveries gave way to repoſe, and early when they reſumed their empire over her imagination, to indulge in her fond preſage of future happineſs.

She ſtrolled into the garden, and was, at the inſtant of her turning towards the temple, deliberating with herſelf whether ſhe might not, by affecting reſerve draw the old fool into marriage; many a one had been ſo caught by thoſe who could not boaſt half her attractions: indeed, one recollection, a trifling objection occurred, namely, her being married already; but that was of ſmall import, Monſieur Frajan was a gentleman who had the honour of belonging to the *Grand Monarque's* guards; he was too polite to be hard of acceſs, and

too poor to be troubleſome; he had the misfortune of not being able to ſupport Madame Frajan in a ſtyle equal to her elevated notions; and he had the happineſs of being too great a philoſopher to let that diſturb his repoſe: but then, ſuppoſing that matter adjuſted, ſhe ſhould be obliged always to live with the ugly wretch; now, as a miſtreſs, ſhe was entitled to ſeparate purſe, ſeparate pleaſures; and, as to intereſt, it is ſeldom, indeed, in that ſituation they are united. Theſe conſiderations being all reduced to facts, what muſt her conſternation be at ſeeing the man who was dying for her, whom ſhe ſet down as her fixed ſlave, on the point of committing violence on a beautiful inmate in the ſame houſe, a mere chit, a girl ſhe held in contempt!—Rage tied her tongue as confuſion did his.

But rage in the Frenchwoman, though ſtrengthened by ſo ſevere a diſappointment had not power to repreſs the happy turn of her nation; her riſible faculties were irreſiſtibly and involuntarily excited by the object before her.

The

The colonel's figure was truly comic;—imagine you ſee a little mean-looking perſon, his eyes not yet recovered from their vicious ſtare, endeavouring to blink away the ſhame of detection; his fine laced ruffles hanging in tatters over his wriſts; and the contraſt between the powder and his olive complexion, rendered ſtill more ſtriking, by its being bruſhed off his head on different parts of his very yellow face; that head, on which time had made woful depredations, it being very near bald; his frizeur had, with great art and care, ſcraped up a few briſtles of venerable hue to dreſs in the front of his wig, which was made ſo exactly to fit, that it was not, till ſhe ſaw it on the floor, mademoiſelle could believe he carried ſo unfaſhionable a thing about him; his locks, totally deranged, hung about his ample forehead; and, his *tout-enſemble* being too much for French gravity, ſhe exclaimed, "Ah, *mon Dieu!* "what, with that figure, would you have "done with the child?" and, burſting into a fit of laughter, picked up his wig, and

begged to have the honour of re-adjuſting his head.

The colonel's enraged looks preſently reminded mademoiſelle of the lapſe ſhe had made: it was, ſhe now recollected, her part to be dying with grief at the diſcovery;—but another diſcovery had likewiſe been made; her exclamation, the loud laugh, the contemptuous ſhrug, ſpoke a language the colonel, with all his vanity, could not help underſtanding; it told him the conqueſt he had meditated was as little likely to injure her peace as his own; ſhe was, therefore, as to her own perſon or ſentiments, not an object in the leaſt intereſting to him, but thoſe involuntary marks of contempt for his perſon would certainly have operated to her immediate diſadvantage, had he not been reſtrained, with a preſence of mind that never ſo entirely forſook him as in the preſent inſtance, by a recollection how much it was in her power to ſerve or injure him in his grand deſign, now inflamed beyond his power of ſubduing.

Bitterly

Bitterly did he curſe the precipitate folly that would, doubtleſsly, alarm the girl, and render the aſſiſtance of this auxiliary of importance: his intention was to have treated Anna with a delicate indulgence, to court her reſpect, to inſinuate himſelf into her confidence, to excite her gratitude; but by no means to alarm the trembling virtue he knew was implanted in her mind.

The ſad gradation, from uncontaminated purity to audacious vice, was a leſſon he had taught many an innocent heart: well was the ſubtle veteran in iniquity acquainted with each winding maze, each artful clue, to attain that horrid end; and deep were his regrets that he had ſuffered paſſion to counteract his uſual precaution.

The girl might now be telling Mrs. Melmoth all that had happened; ſhe might, at this moment, by her artleſs eloquence, be exciting the reſentment of Mr. Melmoth for the inſult offered his friendſhip and hoſpitality; or, in caſe that gentleman might not chooſe to break with ſo valuable a friend,

he might ſend her away; ſhe might eſcape; he might ſee her no more! That idea was not to be borne! no time muſt be loſt. To take the enemy he deteſted to his boſom, while it would anſwer any purpoſe of his own, was what he had practiſed his whole life; but it was not often he had been ſo ſituated with a female, on whom he endeavoured to make an impreſſion, who, after giving every token of a growing attachment, had, in one unguarded moment, convinced him he was her ſcorn. Hard as it was to forgive Frajan's *mon Dieu!* it was here abſolutely neceſſary at leaſt to counterfeit forgiveneſs.

Coming, therefore, directly to the point, he ſeized the hand of the governeſs, which action ſhe miſtaking for an overture towards making an amorous peace, withdrew with the prettieſt aſſumed, ſoft, melancholy, air imaginable; but, from the languiſhing downcaſt, her bold eyes were turned into a ſtare of wonder at the manner of his addreſſing her.

No

No vows, no tender proteſtations, no deprecation of her anger, or promiſes of future fidelity; but a ſacrifice more acceptable, and as well underſtood,—a heavy purſe found its way into her unreluctant hand.——What other arguments (if any were neceſſary) Colonel Gorget made uſe of, to appeaſe the reſentment of Frajan, I know not; certain it is they parted very good friends.

The ſituation in which I left my heroine, ſpread an alarm among the female ſervants; Mrs. Melmoth was acquainted with her indiſpoſition; and very anxious, on her recovery, to know what could have occaſioned ſuch a violent agitation of ſpirits.

Anna's innate delicacy, the modeſty of her nature, and the innocence of her heart, tied her tongue; the recollection of the colonel's inſults filled her with confuſion; ſhe was aſhamed to repeat, even to Mrs. Melmoth, what ſhe had been expoſed to, and afraid to ſay from whom: a flood of tears was the only anſwer ſhe could make; and her benefactreſs, finding her anxiety increaſe

by talking, with the kindeſt expreſſions of affection, left her, and deſcended to the breakfaſt-room.

The colonel entered while Mrs. Melmoth was relating to her huſband Anna's ſudden ilneſs: how he felt is one thing; what he ſaid, and how he looked, another: with well affected pity in his countenance he eagerly liſtened to her whether any part of the temple-ſcene had tranſpired; and, finding, to his great joy, it had not, was then at liberty to be as ſorry for the poor girl as he thought convenient.

Anna gladly made her illneſs an excuſe for not going into the dining-parlour with the children; it was, indeed, more than an excuſe, as ſhe was, ſtill very much indiſpoſed; but, though ſhe did not make Mrs. Melmoth the confidante of her ill treatement, ſhe was leſs reſerved with Mrs. Manſel, to whom ſhe wrote an account of the whole affair, beſeeching her advice how to conduct herſelf with regard to her benefactreſs, as ſhe could not ſummon courage to tell her of the abandoned conduct of a man who

was

was so highly respected in the family: she was not quite at ease with herself at the first concealment she had ever made from that lady.

Curiosity had once tempted Frajan, in breach of all the laws of politeness, to open a letter from Mrs. Mansel to our heroine, who, being taught wisdom by experience, guarded against the like inconvenience, by requesting Mrs. Mansel to direct her answer, under cover, to Jenny Stedman, the nursery-maid.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Fracas.

ANNA kept as much as was in her power to the nurſery, and the governeſs appeared equally deſirous with herſelf to avoid a *tête-à-tête*; nor did ſhe once name the colonel, or drop a ſingle hint of the temple-ſcene.

Some few days after, when our heroine had recovered her ſpirits, ſhe repeated, as in the fulneſs of her heart ſhe often did, how happily her time paſſed with dear Mrs. Manſel: Frajan, who heartily deſpiſed the poor creature, as ſhe called the late governeſs, took occaſion to throw out ſome very ſarcaſtic and contemptuous reflections on her management of the young ladies.

Anna anſwered warmly, and perhaps pertly, that the Miſs Melmoths would have cauſe

cauſe to regret the change as long as they lived; for that, during the eight years Mrs. Manſel reſided at the Lodge, ſhe was, in perſon and mind, one invariable example of the leſſons ſhe taught. This ſpeech (with, I am afraid, rather a marked emphaſis in ſome particular parts of her eulogium) provoked mademoiſelle, who, as I have informed my reader, being married, ſhall be no longer dignified with that title.—Madame Frajan then retorted as ſpitefully as with the aid of malice and ill-will ſhe could; and, as it was a cauſe for which our heroine would have died, ſhe was not ſpared in her turn; and the governeſs, being very little more indebted to patience than to prudence, was ſo enraged, that Anna was obliged to her heels, which preſerved her from the fury of the irritated Frajan.—Diſappointed in her attempts to overtake her, ſhe flew to Mrs. Melmoth; complained loudly of Anna's inſolence; ſaid ſhe had hitherto had the honour of ſerving ladies of the firſt diſtinction, who, thank heaven, had never taken the liberties with her An-

na had done; ſhe would not on any terms put up with it; and ſhe muſt beg Mrs. Melmoth would diſcharge one of them.

The lady found herſelf much embarraſſed by this requiſition of the governeſs, delivered in a ſtyle ſhe by no means approved; ſhe loved her pet; this was the firſt complaint that had been made of her, and ſhe doubted much of the inſolence imputed to a child who was remarkable for her eaſy temper.

Diſmiſſing the complainant, therefore, for the preſent, Anna was ordered to attend Mrs. Melmoth. She was extremely ſurpriſed, when, inſtead of the mild gentle girl, who had never offended a ſingle creature that ſhe knew of, ſhe beheld an abſolute little virago, ſobbing with paſſion and glowing with anger, her face and neck in a flame.

Her benefactreſs began by ſeverely reprehending her for being inſolent to Frajan; but this agitated her ſo much the more as to render her, from paſſion and tears, unintelligible,

intelligible, ſo that ſhe was diſmiſſed in great anger.

Cut to the ſoul at having, for the firſt time, offended Mrs. Melmoth, Anna ſent in an hour after, and begged repeatedly to be admitted, but ſhe had too ſeriouſly offended to be indulged.

Mr. Melmoth, unfortunately for Anna, was gone to the county-aſſize, which generally kept him three days from the Lodge, and the colonel, having at laſt received the welcome mandate from Lord Bury, was at his houſe.

Lady Waldron found herſelf ſo well entertained in the ſociety of this amiable perſonage, ſhe prevailed on him to ſit down to picquet with her after dinner, when ſhe contrived to eaſe him of a hundred pieces; which, notwithſtanding it infringed on one of his eſtabliſhed rules, he paid with great politeneſs and good humour; though I cannot but own, ſome trifling manœuvres in the lady's play might have diſcompoſed any other ſet of features but thoſe of the colonel; yet he had dined with Lord Bury

and

and Lady Waldron, and it was not in nature to be out of temper in ſuch company, and the lady had promiſed to preſide at a *fête* he intended to give on his return to London:—theſe were circumſtances ſo highly acceptable to his wiſhes, it could not but have a very happy effect on his ſpirits, which was ſtill viſible when he attended Mrs. Melmoth to breakfaſt next morning. He heard from his fair hoſteſs, in her open communicative way, the fracas between Anna and Frajan, and, at the ſame inſtant, her ſurpriſe and diſpleaſure at the paſſion, or ſtubborn ſpirit, ſhe did not know which to call it, of her *protégée*.

Mrs. Melmoth was artleſs and undeſigning in her own nature, and ſo pliably diſpoſed toward the colonel, that all he ſaid bore the ſemblance of wiſdom and juſtice. Mr. Melmoth enforced reſpect by the honour and probity of his diſpoſition. Madam Frajan was ready for any ſcheme of iniquity. Now was the propitious moment, now the time, if ever, for the colonel

nel to ſecure to himſelf the poſſeſſion of the charming object of all his wiſhes.

He ſmiled.

It was not a ſmile of approbation.

It was not a ſmile of pleaſure.

Neither could it be ſaid to be a ſmile of contempt.

But the colonel could ſmile, and turn, and ſmile again.

He had the art of making his features ſpeak what, with great honour, his tongue might deny.

The ſmile called up the colour of Mrs. Melmoth into her cheeks.

It ſaid;

"What, madam, is it only now you are "acquainted with this girl's ill diſpoſition?" It ſaid more than that; it called for an apology from Mrs. Melmoth for what her heart had always told her was the moſt meritorious act of her life, and obliged her to plead the deſtitute ſituation of Anna, as well as her having been at that time childleſs, as an excuſe for what had been her boaſt.

A ſecond ſmile deprived her of the power of advancing another ſyllable in vindication of her own charity.

An obſtinate ſilence on the part of her gueſt, till the breakfaſt-things were removed, threw her into an agitation ſhe could not account for; but the good colonel was at no ſuch loſs; he knew its ſource as well as the means of improving it to his advantage.

A turn or two acroſs the room, in deep contemplation, heightened the ſolemnity of his viſage and addreſs, when he, looking full at her, demanded, on her ſacred honour, how long ſhe had known this girl?

Though aſtoniſhed both at the queſtion and the manner of its being put, it was not poſſible ſhe could deviate from the account he had already heard, as that account was ſtrictly true.

Her anſwer threw him into another fit of ſilence, and then, without farther ceremony, he acquainted her with the reaſons aſſigned by the ladies of the family for not viſiting

viſiting her; adding, that it was a fact implicitly believed all over the country, that Anna was her own natural daughter; that the girl was ſo inſufferably haughty and overbearing, it confirmed the general report; and it was on that principle, and the fear of giving her offence, that ſhe was the laſt who was informed of what the whole country rang of.

Every attempt of mine to deſcribe the ſurpriſe and diſtreſs of Mrs. Melmoth, at this mortifying ſtroke, would be totally inadequate to her feelings; I will therefore beg my readers to make the caſe their own. It was with great pain that ſhe ſupported herſelf till her maid brought ſalts and water: her laces were cut; and a friendly ſhower of tears a little relieving her, the firſt uſe ſhe made of the returning power of ſpeech was to direct Mr. Melmoth to be immediately ſent for.

This was not what our man of gallantry wanted. He ever declined altercations with men, particularly thoſe of underſtanding; he therefore took the liberty of privately

vately countermanding Mrs. Melmoth's orders, and begged ſhe would retire and compoſe herſelf, and when ſhe was recovered, he would requeſt to be admitted to her apartment.

The moment the illneſs of her benefactreſs reached the ears of Anna, ſhe ran to her in agony, and continued about her, regardleſs of the preſence of Colonel Gorget, whom, in her concern for her friend, ſhe entirely overlooked. She followed Mrs. Melmoth to her chamber, and lamented ſo tenderly and ſo reſpectfully any thing ſhould ail her, that ſhe could not find in her heart to retain any diſpleaſure againſt the poor girl, notwithſtanding ſuch a provoking interpretation of her motives for her partiality as that ſhe was juſt informed of.

The lively and grateful ſenſations of our heroine were not unnoticed by the colonel, who, dreading the influence of ſenſibility over the mind of Mrs. Melmoth, did not chooſe to truſt them long together; but, as ſoon as any kind of regard to decency would permit

permit him, ſent his requeſt to be admitted; the lady then, kiſſing Anna, bade her retire, and the colonel entered.

He began in very moving terms to inveigh againſt the ill-nature and ſcandal of the world;—that part of it, which could wreſt ſo laudable an act into ſo infamous a meaning, deſerved annihilation.

The injured lady ſaid ſhe would not inſult his judgment ſo much as to enter into a vindication of her innocence; ſhe was ſure it would appear with ſuch unqueſtionable proofs as would cover her calumniators with ſhame.

He ſuffered her to proceed in a mixture of grief and paſſion till tears again relieved her full heart; then, opening what he had farther to ſay with the moſt flaming profeſſions of friendſhip and regard, vowing he had not himſelf a doubt but ſhe was as innocent as he knew her to be amiable, begged to obſerve to her, ſcandal was much eaſier raiſed than refuted; it was likewiſe much eaſier refuted than ſilenced; while, therefore, the girl continued under her protection,

tection, what had been believed would be remembered.

" And what, ſir," ſaid Mrs. Melmoth, eagerly interrupting him, " muſt become " of the poor thing?"

" What, madam," anſwered he gravely, " will become of her if you ſtill keep her? " you know beſt; but I adviſe you to con- " ſider whether your circumſtances are ſuch " as will provide for a girl you have ſo im- " properly educated; or, if they are, could " you knowingly fix ſuch an indelible ſtain " on your huſband's family as ſuffering a " weak attachment to influence you to " perſevere in confirming the ſhameful re- " ports already circulated?—Come, come, " Mrs. Melmoth, you muſt forgive me " if, for the ſake of your children, your " own ſake, and that of the reſpectable " family (I ſpeak not in contempt of your " own) into which you are married, I urge " you to the only act which can clear your " character in the opinion of the world; " for my own part, I frankly confeſs I look " on myſelf, though not of their blood, as

" allied

" allied to the honour of the Melmoths.—
" You muſt poſitively part with this
" girl."

" Ah!" ſaid Mrs. Melmoth, weeping,
" ſhe is the beſt creature in the world.
" What will become of her poor, poor,
" girl! my heart bleeds for her."—" Oh,
" ſhe would do very well. The parſon,
" from whom ſhe was taken, would pro-
" vide more properly for her, by getting
" her a ſervice, than ſhe could by keeping
" her in a character it was very unlikely ſhe
" would ever be able to ſupport."

In ſhort, partly by hints that he ſhould be eternally diſobliged by her not adopting his opinion, and partly by his abſolute aſſurance, on his honour, that the girl was wholly unworthy the kindneſs ſhewn her, of which her treatment of the amiable Frajan, a perſon who certainly had been very much eſteemed by people of the firſt diſtinction, was one of the many inſtances he knew, but did not chooſe to repeat; he at length prevailed on the gentleſt of female hearts to be guilty of an act of deliberate

berate cruelty, by diſcarding, without any real provocation, from her favour and protection, an innocent, unoffending, young creature, ſhe had adopted as her own child, without firſt informing herſelf whether any other perſon would receive her.

Eager to carry his deep-laid plan into execution through all delay or oppoſition, "*A propos*, madam," ſaid he, "the "London ſtage paſſes to-morrow morn- "ing;—oblige me by exerting your reſo- "lution:—accept this ſacrifice to your hu- "manity," preſenting a bank-note of twenty pounds;—"ſee her no more as you va- "lue your own peace or my friendſhip. "And here," continued the generous creature, "I believe I have not yet paid my "entrance into the good graces of my E- "liza; do me the honour of preſenting "her with what this will purchaſe in my "name," putting into Mrs. Melmoth's hand another note of one hundred pounds.

Gratitude, prudence, and that all-ſubduing argument, ſelf-intereſt, were too powerful to be reſiſted;—it overcame all farther

ther ſcruples:—Frajan was ſummoned,—She was directed to ſend Anna away by the London ſtage; and, in fine, the *pet* was diſcarded, the *orphan* no longer protected!

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Rencontre.

WITH what a light heart and gladdened countenance did Frajan fly to execute her commiſſion. "It cannot be!" ſaid the petrified Anna; "it is not in the "nature of my dear benefactreſs to be ſo "cruel. What! turn me out of her "houſe, without ſuffering the poor girl ſhe "has ſo often and often preſſed to her "heart, to kiſs her dear hand, to pray for "and to bleſs her for her goodneſs! You "are ſurely diverting yourſelf, madam, by "ſporting with my misfortunes." The unfeeling

unfeeling governeſs aſſured her over and over of the truth of her meſſage. She adviſed her as a friend to make the beſt of the matter, pack up her traſh, and, ſince go ſhe muſt, ſet off with a grace, that the ſervants might not make their obſervations.

" Ah!" anſwered Anna, " how much " at eaſe muſt that mind be, which, in ſuch " a moment, could be biaſſed by ſuch tri- " vial ideas! Alas! I think not of any " thing but never ſeeing my dear Mrs. " Melmoth more,—of being for ever ſe- " parated from my ſweet Eliza,—of no " more being permitted to hear from dear " Mr. Melmoth the inſtructions of wiſdom, " or to thank him for thoſe he has already " taught me. Do, dear mademoiſelle, " beg for me! Alas! I have long ex- " pected to go,—but not in ſo very ſudden, " nor in ſo diſgraceful, a manner."

" Not I," anſwered the Frenchwoman: " I aſſure you. You think to whine Mrs. " Melmoth out of her reſolution; but the " colonel will take care of that."

" It

It is then to his endeavours and yours," returned Anna, with ſpirit, "I owe the "loſs of my benefactreſs's favour; I will "not, therefore, trouble you with any meſ-"ſage to her; but as to your aſſociate, you "may tell him, it is poor ſpite in ſuch an "old man, to perſecute a young girl "whoſe offences towards him are her "ſtrongeſt claim to the favour of heaven. "God reward you both. I have no ſelfiſh "regrets at leaving this place; none but "what ariſe from my grateful love to its "owners.—Dear ſpot," continued ſhe, looking mournfully round her, "once the "hallowed retreat of peace, content, and "unanimity, the bright dwelling of vir-"tue, the ſeat of wiſdom! but now"—(darting a look of contempt into the guilty ſoul of Frajan) "you, madam, and Colo-"nel Gorget are here;—why need I de-"ſcribe the hateful reverſe?"

It is not to be ſuppoſed Frajan, whoſe leaſt virtue was patience, bore this keen reproach without retorting, which ſhe did with all the ſpite and abuſe in her power;

and that, it must be confessed, is saying a great deal.

Anna, full of her own concerns, heeded her not. She set about packing up her trash, as Frajan had not improperly called her wearing apparel: for she had grown so very fast, and money was so scarce an article at the Lodge, that she had, for the last three or four years, been altering and cutting up one old thing to piece out another, without having the deficiency supplied by any thing new; so that, though she was blessed with a person and manner that stamped the gentlewoman on her appearance let her dress be what it would, her cloaths were but a sorry recommendation to respect, and, bad as they were, less useful than valuable; such as she had, however, she put up in a small trunk of Mrs. Mansel's, and a smaller bundle, and then, once more, made an effort to see Mrs. Melmoth, by prevailing on the footman to deliver an humble, but ardent, request to be indulged with one moment's audience after tea; but the colonel, who stirred not from the lady's side the whole day, frustrated

ted her wiſhes by ſetting his negative on the meſſage as ſoon as delivered.

She was likewiſe forbid ſeeing the children. Mademoiſelle would not ſuffer them to be diſturbed with her deceitful whimpering.

This, though meant as an act of cruelty and mortification, was, in its effect, the kindeſt thing that could have happened; for Anna ſo doted on Eliza, the parting with her would have half broken her heart, without anſwering any purpoſe but rendering her unfit for her long journey.

Such a ſudden turn could not but ſurpriſe the ſervants; but, as every creature in the houſe (thoſe only moſt concerned excepted) had heard, and, indeed, generally believed, the report ſo long circulated reſpecting the conſanguinity of Anna to Mrs. Melmoth, ſo when, by the colonel's command, the old valet communicated to them the injury that had been done their miſtreſs, and aſſigned that as a reaſon for the diſcarding our heroine, in order to clear the lady's character, which had been falſely aſ-

perſed, it became a matter of courſe. They, however, were all filled with pity and regret at parting with her; every ſervant in the houſe followed her with cordial wiſhes for her health and proſperity. Jenny, the nurſery-maid, who had been her's when ſhe firſt came to the Lodge, wept over her, and promiſed faithfully to ſend Mrs. Manſel's letter the inſtant it arrived. No choice was left her, otherwiſe her inclinations would have led her, as ſhe promiſed, to Wales; but Mrs. Melmoth's commands were, that ſhe ſhould go to London; and, as ſhe had never yet diſobeyed any order of that lady, ſhe did not chooſe to do it now.

At four o'clock in the morning the ſtage ſtopped, by order, at the Lodge.

Mrs. Melmoth, not then under the conſtraint impoſed by her artful gueſt, got out of bed to take, in a peep through the curtain, a parting view of her pet; ſhe ſaw her ſlow, reluctant, ſteps followed by all the maids and ſome of the men, wiping the faſt-falling tears from her face, which,

on

on her reaching the ſtage, was turned full to her apartment, and then to the nurſery; and, after a minute's pauſe, in ſilent grief, with an act at once graceful and affecting, ſhe extended her open hand to each, firſt conſecrating it with a kiſs, then, making an eaſy courteſy in return to the benedictions of the ſervants, with a burſting heart ſhe aſcended into the vehicle.

Mrs. Melmoth's emotions were ſo ſtrong at the laſt ſight of a child ſhe had brought up, and her affection, renewing, filled her with ſuch regret at her departure, that ſhe rang for her maid, in her firſt agitation, to have Anna detained. Kitty, who, with her fellow-ſervants, was at the gate, not directly hearing the bell, the ſtage was far out of ſight before ſhe attended her miſtreſs, whom ſhe found in a fit of hyſterics, which rendered her unable to breakfaſt below.

Nor was ſhe the only perſon whoſe reſt was diſturbed by a deſire to ſee the laſt of our heroine.

Madame Frajan was too full of joy at this event not to delight her eyes with ſo

acceptable a ſight: but ſhe had another reaſon,—ſhe had thought proper to convert the twenty-pound note, given her for Anna, into ten guineas, which ſhe thought quite enough for ſuch a brat, prudently ſinking the remainder into her own purſe, as ſhe muſt certainly be a better judge how to uſe that ſum than ſuch an ignorant thing as Anna; but, however ſhe might reconcile the diſcretion of the act to her own mind, ſhe was not quite ſo eaſy in her apprehenſions of detection; nor could ſhe ſecurely enjoy the ſucceſs of her fraud till our heroine was out of ſight when ſhe returned to her repoſe, and ſlept, according to cuſtom, till ten o'clock.

Colonel Gorget too—but let me not make a miſtake! his reſt was not broken by his curioſity, for he actually was too much overjoyed to take any: he told, in wakeful anxiety, the tedious hours as they paſſed, till the welcome one arrived, which, by removing Anna from Melmoth-Lodge, carried her nearer the habitation he was ſo kind as to deſign for her; not without e-

motion,

motion, though of a different nature, did he watch every graceful attitude of his unconſcious charmer; his heart throbbed with ungoverned extacy; and, when the coach drove off, he pronounced himſelf the happieſt of men.

The tears, which plentifully flowed from the eyes of our young traveller, at firſt hindered her obſerving her companions. They conſiſted of an aged farmer-looking man, a pretty young woman, his daughter, with whom he was returning from a viſit they had been making to ſome near relations, who lived thirty miles beyond Melmoth-Lodge, to Epſom, where they reſided, and the identical Dame Plunket; the latter was grown a few years older it is true; ſhe was a good deal fatter; and ſomewhat richer than when laſt ſhe travelled in company with our heroine; but her malignant, buſy, cenſorious, diſpoſition ſtill remained; and as her ill-will to 'Squire Melmoth's family was now encouraged by their being reduced in their fortune, they were hardly out of ſight of the houſe when ſhe began to o-

pen with ſuch coarſe and illiberal abuſe of them, and ſuch unintelligible, though diſguſting, inferences, on ſo fine a lady's being returned to her original poverty, which, according to her account, was bad indeed, that Anna heard her with aſtoniſhment, not at firſt knowing it was to her ſhe was ſpeaking.

When, however, ſhe did underſtand the vulgar jargon was addreſſed to herſelf, and called to mind the woman whoſe diſagreeable behaviour had made a laſting impreſſion on her memory, it had a very different effect from what the notable dame expected; for, inſtead of mortifying, as ſhe kindly intended, it exhilarated her ſpirits; her pride (of which ſhe had no inconſiderable ſhare) was hurt, and, being rouſed by inſults ſhe could not have provoked, no longer ſuffered the deſpondency of her countenance to encourage the attacks of her ill-conditioned fellow-traveller.

The uncommon beauty of her perſon, with the ſweetneſs of her manners, prejudiced the old man and his daughter very much in her favour, which ſhe improved by all

all the little attentions in her power, while ſhe treated the malicious ſhopkeeper with every mark of indifference and contempt.

Enraged at ſuch airs, Mrs. Plunket ſneeringly congratulated her on Mrs. Melmoth's acquiſition of a friend who durſt tell her her own. Every body, ſhe ſaid, knew Colonel Gorget's viſit to Aſhby-Grove would rout her out ot the Lodge, and fit it ſhould! Miſs Caroline Aſhby was a gentlewoman, and it was very hard ſhe ſhould give up to the Lord knows whom!—Oh! if the old 'ſquire could but look down and ſee the doings, which were carrying on at Melmoth-Lodge, he would not reſt in his grave! Poor dear creature, he little thought his eſtate would be ſpent to ſupport madams and baſtards!

All that Anna could make out of this fine harangue was, that Colonel Gorget was her enemy, and that Mrs. Plunket was a friend to no one but herſelf; but, as ſhe moſt heartily hated the former, and found herſelf much inclined to deſpiſe the latter, it gave her little concern.

They arrived, without any accident, at the ſecond night's ſtage; when, to her great mortification, ſhe underſtood ſhe was the next day to loſe her friendly companions, and be left wholly to the ſociety of Mrs. Plunket; her inſuperable diſlike to that notable dame rendered her extremely uneaſy; the young woman obſerved it, and good-naturedly preſſed her to alight at Kew-bridge with them where their one-horſe chaiſe would meet them to croſs the country, and thence to Epſom, whence carriages went every day to town.

Anna endeavoured, in vain, to reaſon herſelf out of her prejudices; the more ſhe thought of it, the more ſhe felt her heart ſicken at the idea of proceeding on her journey to London with the diſagreeable ſhopkeeper, and, at length recollecting Mr. Dalton was not apprized of her coming, accepted the offer made her by the good country-folks. A man was procured to carry her luggage, and ſhe accompanied her honeſt companions over Kew-bridge, and got to Epſom to dinner.

The

The farmer was a widower in good circumſtances; his daughter managed his houſe; they were induſtrious inoffenſive people; eaſy as to ſituation, and mild in their tempers; they grew more pleaſed with their gueſt the longer they knew her, and were importunate in their intreaties, as ſhe informed them her friends were unacquainted with her journey, to ſtay with them a few days before ſhe proceeded to London.

The open-hearted friendſhip and guileleſs ſincerity of theſe honeſt people were too conſonant with her own diſpoſition not to be very pleaſing to her. She accepted their invitation, and wrote to Mr. Dalton to inform him of her leaving the Lodge, and where ſhe now was, but referred him to their meeting, which would be in a few days, for particulars.

This was one of thoſe incidents in human life on which often ſecretly depends the good or evil of our days. It was to our heroine a particular intervention of that providence which, we hope and believe,

makes innocence its care; an intervention that could be neither foreſeen nor pre-concerted, and which preſerved her honour, if not her life.

Perhaps the reader may ſuſpect that ſomething more than the honour of the Melmoth's family was Colonel Gorget's inducement ſo ſtrenuouſly to urge the removal of Anna, and may ſuppoſe he might promiſe himſelf ſome advantages from the diſtreſs Mrs. Melmoth's deſertion would expoſe her to;—he did more; he took meaſures which he flattered himſelf would put it in his power to make good that loſs by being her protector himſelf. Of one thing he was certain; no character of his, no reputation or honour he poſſeſſed, could ſuffer by that or any other ſtep. He had written ſome days back to prepare one of thoſe horrid wretches, who make a traffic of female honour, to entrap and guard the unſuſpicious girl when ſhe ſhould arrive in London; and, the inſtant he could be ſure of her poſitive diſmiſſion from the Lodge, he ſent off his truſty ſervant expreſs, with orders

orders for his agent to wait the arrival of the ſtage, in a hackney-coach, before it reached Hyde-park Corner; ſhe was then to ſay, Mr. Dalton not being at home, and Mrs. Dalton indiſpoſed, ſhe was come from them, in conſequence of a letter received from Mrs. Melmoth, to conduct her to her friends.

This ſcheme would certainly have taken effect, as Anna was not only a ſtranger to the world, but to all kinds of fraud and double-dealing, had it not been for the accident before related.

When the ſtage-coach paſſed, it was accordingly ſtopped, and Anna enquired for; happily Mrs. Plunket was too much enraged at the inſolence of the ſaucy beggar to anſwer any interrogatories; ſhe knew nothing of or about her, and, in a huff drawing up the blind, refuſed to ſay another word, leaving the enquirer to learn of the coachman what he knew, which was little enough; all he could ſay was, that he ſet three paſſengers down at Brentford, but who or what they were he could not tell,

as

as he had driven the coach but from the laſt change of horſes before they left him.

The valet being within call, although he kept out of ſight, was now conſulted: he was ſure no perſon whatever ſet off with Anna from Melmoth-Lodge; he ſaw her go himſelf, but, as he well knew his maſter's heart was ſet on the accompliſhment of his deſign, they agreed to go on to Brentford, examining, without ſucceſs, every carriage that paſſed. As they could gain no kind of information, the woman returned to town, and Walters went on with his ill news to his maſter, who was waiting in anxious expectation to learn the ſucceſs of his ſcheme.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Curtain-Lecture.

WHEN Anna left Melmoth-Lodge, Colonel Gorget, joyleſs and inſipid as now appeared every thing there, affected to be in the beſt humour and higheſt ſpirits in the world. Mrs. Melmoth's were as proportionably low. Indiſpoſed, and diſſatisfied with herſelf, it required all his efforts to keep her up: he was attentive to every ook and word; nothing could exceed the warmth of the friendſhip and eſteem he profeſſed for her; he romped with Eliza, and her infant ſiſter came in for a ſhare of his careſſes; to divert the too intenſe reflections of Mrs. Melmoth was no leſs his ſtudy than his intereſt.

He could form no excuſe for leaving the Lodge juſt now; he did not, indeed, chooſe

to

to ſtir till the longed-for news came from his agent in town; but he took occaſion to alter his mind from a circumſtance he did not foreſee.

When Mr. Melmoth returned from his little journey, he was moſt graciouſly received by his good friend the colonel; and this particular civility was the more agreeable to him at that time, as he met a perſon at the aſſize, who, having a large mortgage on his eſtate, had dropped ſome ugly hints about foreclоſure, which much mortified and hurt him; and he juſt reſolved to open his mind to his zealous friend, not doubting but he would rejoice in an opportunity to give him proofs of that good-will he ſo liberally profeſſed by advancing the money and taking the mortgage into his own hands.

The fond father called for his children the inſtant of his arrival; and, pulling out of his pocket a beautiful drawing, ſaid, Mrs. Laſmayor, a lady who lived at the county town, begged Anna would copy it for her.

"Alas!"

"Alas!" anſwered Mrs. Melmoth, burſting into tears, "ſhe is not here,—ſhe is "gone,—I have ſent her away!"

Mr. Melmoth, in the utmoſt aſtoniſhment, demanded her meaning. Colonel Gorget, then (for the lady was unable) related the whole affair; but Mr. Melmoth's generous heart, ſo far from according with the colonel's opinion, recoiled from the prejudices he ſaw that good man wiſhed to inſpire; he reproached his wife ſeverely, both for her want of feeling and judgment, in parting with the lovely orphan they had ſo long patroniſed, and brought up with ſuch care, who ſo amply repaid them by her amiable diſpoſition and fine qualities. The ſtory, repeated ſo pompouſly by Colonel Gorget, had long reached him; he was told of it within a few months of its invention; but, too generous to avenge the cauſe of the guilty on the innocent, he took every other poſſible method to convince thoſe, whoſe good opinion he valued, of its falſehood and abſurdity; but it had never ſtruck him, as it had done his *worthy* friend, that diſcarding

diſcarding the unoffending orphan could operate as a juſtification of his wife's character. Perfectly ſatisfied with it himſelf, he choſe not to diſturb her peace by troubling her with the ſurmiſes of others; and, as to the quarrel with the French governeſs, he avowed the moſt contemptible opinion of that lady, her abilities, and principles: in ſhort, Mrs. Melmoth had never ſeen her huſband ſo much hurt or diſpleaſed with her before; ſhe pleaded the colonel's advice and aſſiſtance in parting with Anna, and he, conſequently, attempted to convince them both that he acted on principle; but thoſe arguments, which the lady had found unanſwerable, appeared equally fallacious and ridiculous to her huſband; he ſwore never to forgive the inhumanity of the act, and keenly upbraided his gueſt for urging Mrs. Melmoth to a ſtep that would, in the judgment of every humane being, be a reproach to her as long as ſhe lived.

This was a kind of freedom Colonel Gorget could by no means reliſh; but, as he knew how to turn every thing to his advantage,

advantage, he immediately recollected that a breach with Mr. Melmoth at this particular period was the moſt convenient thing that could happen; he vindicated his conduct with a mixture of acrimony and haughtineſs he was well aware would exaſperate inſtead of appeaſing: his wiſh was now to make matters worſe;—his plan ſucceeded,—Mr. Melmoth, in the involuntary reſentment of his generous heart, and in his compaſſionate feelings for the poor orphan, forgot his mortgage, his poverty, and his hopes; he had even the imprudence to revert to ſome circumſtances in the life of the great man, which, as he choſe to conſign them to oblivion himſelf, he cold never forgive Mr. Melmoth for remembering.—His horſes were directly ordered; and, though it was paſt ten o'clock, he ſet off, after profuſely paying the ſervants for the trouble he had given their maſter, to Mrs. Aſhby's leaving his hoſts, for the firſt time in their lives, angry and diſſatisfied with each other.

The

The morning, with his wife's tears and remonſtrances, brought cooler thoughts to Mr. Melmoth; for, though he ſtill continued his partial regrets for the fate of Anna, he began to be ſenſible of his impolitic conduct towards a man who had it ſo amply in his power, and, he had every reaſon to conclude, in his inclination, to ſerve him. Mrs. Melmoth, on her part, lamented, with ſome little aſperity, the fracas that had at once deprived them of the advantages and hopes her ſanguine ideas had brought to a certainty, and could not help inveighing bitterly againſt that warmth in her huſband, excited by the intereſt of a perſon who was nothing to him, to the prejudice and, perhaps, ruin of his own children. He felt the ſad concluſion of her argument, though he was ſelf-acquitted as to that part of his conduct which had brought on him the diſpleaſure of the colonel; nevertheleſs, in compliance with the requeſt of his wife, he rode over to Mrs. Aſhby's to make what ſubmiſſions his circumſtances, not his judgment, dictated.

But

But his wiſh to conciliate matters was entirely fruſtrated; the Machiavel he followed was congratulating himſelf on his eſcape from the Lodge. He was but too happy at being furniſhed, by the ſimple honeſty of Mr. Melmoth, with an excuſe that would juſtify him for breaking with people, who, building their airy caſtles on ſo ſlight a fabric as his promiſes, might have been ſo impertinent as to charge him with ingratitude, as well as injuſtice, when they found how wide apart promiſe and performance were with ſo great a man.

He refuſed even to ſee his late-eſteemed friend; and Mrs. Aſhby, now juſtified in her ſpleen, and gratified in her malice towards her ſiſter-in-law, failed not to pay her own court at the expence of her relations; ſcandal took the hint; Mrs. Melmoth had loſt Colonel Gorget's favour owing to keeping her baſtard at the lodge; the mortgagee preſſed for his money; creditors grew clamourous; the now-diſtreſſed Mr. Melmoth, urged by neceſſity, wrote repeatedly

repeatedly to the callous colonel, and at laſt his letters were returned unopened.

It will not be wondered that, in ſo unpleaſant a ſituation, all thoughts of Anna were ſunk in their own difficulties; there remained for poor Mr. Melmoth but one alternative, either to give up his all, or leave the kingdom, which he and his family very precipitately did, firſt diſcharging, with every mark of contempt and diſguſt, the French governeſs.

While theſe matters were tranſacting at the Lodge, Colonel Gorget was impatiently waiting the return of his ſervant: but the diſappointment of his hopes, and the pangs it gave him, began the puniſhment due to his hypocriſy at the inſtant he promiſed himſelf the full enjoyment of his wiſh; he had been ſo very careful to attend to the leaſt *minutiæ*, and made ſo ſure of ſucceeding in his plan, that he could ſcarcely credit his ſervant's proteſtations of the zeal and fidelity with which both himſelf and aſſociate had executed their commiſſion.

After a thouſand queſtions, and as many curſes, he pretended urgent buſineſs; took

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a very tender leave of Mrs. Aſhby and Miſs Caroline, for whom he vowed eternal friendſhip, and ſet out for London, ſtopping at every inn, where the ſtage called, to trace the loſt object of his deſires. He found Walter's report confirmed at Brentford, where he loſt her himſelf; but, not content thus to give up happineſs juſt as he flattered himſelf it would be within his graſp, he firſt ſet a watch about Dalton's houſe, from which finding no Anna was there, he went perſonally to make enquiries; and, relying on the truth of Mrs. Melmoth's account of the manner in which Dalton had firſt met her, he introduced himſelf by pretending ſome knowledge of her parentage.—Nothing proſpered with the poor colonel that tended to the deſtruction of our heroine; the method he fixed on to gain intelligence was preciſely the one leaſt calculated to anſwer the purpoſe.

Mr. Dalton dreaded no event in the world ſo much as a diſcovery of Anna's family, ſince that muſt conſequently lead to a ſettlement he was every day more averſe to making.

making. He was much mortified by the receipt of Anna's letter from Epſom, as he had hoped all trouble and expence, on her account, were ended; but that mortification was tranſient, as it was ſucceeded by enquiries he believed came from a relation, who would have more eaſily traced her to the Lodge than he could do, either to where ſhe now was, or where he might with great eaſe remove her. He, therefore, abſolutely and reſolutely denied knowing any thing of or about ſuch a perſon; aſſuming ſuch an air of truth, that the colonel began to doubt his own judgment, and to conclude the girl was actually, as was reported, the daughter of Mrs. Melmoth; which, after continuing, for ſome time, his watch in vain in Dalton's neighbourhood, he at laſt believed, and that ſhe had been conveyed, by order of her mother, out of the road of inquiry.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XX.

Another Journey.

AT this time two of Dalton's children lay ill in the ſmall pox, an accident particularly favourable to his views of concealing our heroine, as they knew not whether ſhe had had that diſtemper.

When her letter (in which ſhe told him of the neceſſity ſhe was under again to trouble him for an aſylum, till ſome mode could be fixed on to enable her to ſupport herſelf) came to him, and that followed by inquiries after her that filled him with diſmay, he wrote directly to inform her of the ſituation of his family, deſiring her to remain where ſhe was for ſome little time; generouſly adding to make ſure of her not coming to town that he would

pay for her board, and promiſing to ſee her very ſoon.

Three days after came to his houſe, incloſed by the faithful Jenny, Mrs. Manſel's anſwer to Anna's letter.

Guilty minds are ſoon alarmed; every thing that concerned his charge, was at this period particularly intereſting to Dalton; he was at no time reſtrained by a ſenſe of honour; and now curioſity had ſelf-preſervation to aid it—the ſeals were cautiouſly broken—and the contents filled him with ſuch joy, that having as cautiouſly re-ſealed the packet, he went to Epſom for the purpoſe of delivering it.

His ſurpriſe was inexpreſſible, at being there ſhewn into a neat country parlour, where a tall, elegant young creature, whoſe looks and manners ſtill more than her beauty commanded reſpect, ſoon recollected him, and threw herſelf at his feet, with the moſt lively expreſſions of gratitude and affection—He felt an involuntary kind of awe, accompanied with a pang ſomething reſembling conſcience, which

which choaked his utterance though I will not venture to ſay it was that irreſiſtible monitor; becauſe, if it were from that time to the period in which I now write, I do not believe it had diſturbed him with a ſecond viſit: however, he ſoon got the better of it, be it what it would, and congratulated Anna on her improvements, at the ſame time obſerving, how very lucky it was ſhe had been prevented going to London, as her beauty might have been ſpoiled by the ſmall pox.

"I am ſhoure," ſaid the good old farmer "that would be a ſad pity; God "bleſs her, I would keep her for ever "firſt." As Dalton found, to his great ſatisfaction, the honeſt farmer would take no money for the time Anna had been there, he very earneſtly offered it; but the honeſt creatures meant the friendſhip they expreſſed, and ſo far from accepting his money, begged Anna would remain with them till all danger was over; but the letter Mr. Dalton brought with him, put every other

idea out of her head; ſhe was on the wing to obey its contents, which was as follows:

"My dearest Child,

"Your laſt letter fills me with ſuch apprehenſions for your ſafety, that I ſhall not reſt till you are with me.

"I adviſe you, my dear Anna, to make Mrs. Melmoth the confident of the wicked Colonel's conduct; ſhe may, perhaps, have her reaſons to avoid a breach with him, but I am ſure her regard to virtue and delicacy, as well as her undoubted affection for you, will induce her to grant the requeſt I make her this poſt of ſuffering you to pay me a viſit: but my Anna, this is on a ſuppoſition, no other inſult may have rendered it expedient for you to leave the Lodge, or that by the contrivance of ſo bad a man and woman, which I expect, you may be ſent from thence—if either of thoſe ſhould be the caſe, God, I truſt, will preſerve you, and enable you to come

come to me in ſafety; my ſweet child, how dearly have I miſſed you, and with what pleaſure have I begun to decorate an apartment that ſhall be your own.

"Mr. Manſel, the tendereſt of huſbands, and moſt worthy of men, bought a Piano Forte yeſterday at Caermarthen for you; it has a good tone, and in repair; though the lady who had it was ſo long in ill health before ſhe died, it has not lately been uſed: the woodbines and jeſſamines in front of your little room rather darken it, as the caſements in this country are ſmall, but they ſhall be taught to grow in forms moſt pleaſing to the child of my heart.

"How often have you contributed to my happineſs! come to me, my own Anna; it is only your ſociety that is wanting to complete the felicity of your affectionate,

And truly
Maternal friend,
MARIA MANSEL."

"LLANDORE."

Subjoined to the foregoing.

"MY DEAR MISS,

"You muſt forgive my joining Mrs. Manſel, in requeſting you will oblige us with your company, as ſoon as can be made agreeable to yourſelf; the Brecknock ſtage ſets out from Lad Lane twice a week, from whence I will fetch you—pray appriſe me of the time.

I am,

With great regard,

Your humble ſervant,

DAVID MANSEL."

Mr. Dalton made a merit of conſenting to the thing of all others moſt agreeable to himſelf.

He promiſed to enquire out the ſtage, and examine the books, and when any female paſſengers were going, to let her know.

The honeſt farmer inſiſted on her ſtay with him till the day of her departure for Wales,

Wales, as ſhe could not be received at her friend's without danger to herſelf.

Mr. Dalton inquired into the ſtate of her finances, and was rejoiced to hear they ſtood in no need of his aſſiſtance.

The manner in which ſhe had been diſmiſſed from the Lodge, very ſlightly claimed his attention; ſo his end was anſwered, it would have been new, indeed, for him to concern himſelf about the means—he returned to town full of encomiums on his ward, but reſolved to looſe no time in getting rid of her, which he had an immediate opportunity of doing.

A clergyman's widow, who received the annual bounty, was come from Wales to London, to get the apprentice fee for her daughter, who ſhe bound to a mantua-maker, and happened to hit on a woman, who in conſideration of Dalton's religious principles, and profeſſed poverty, and being one of his hearers, very kindly accepted from him five pounds, being exactly one quarter of the ſum he received from the fund of the clergy, as an

apprentice fee of his daughter.—Mrs. Bowen, a widow, and mother of a large family, had not worldly wiſdom enough to make ſo good a bargain; ſhe paid the whole ſum, got her penſion, and was returning home, very thankful for the benefits ſhe had received, when Dalton was on the look out for a proper opportunity of conveying Anna to her friends.

Mrs. Bowen, though in the next pariſh to Llandore, lived five miles from Mr. Manſel's, but ſhe engaged nevertheleſs to deliver her to Mrs. Manſel.

The ſtage left town the ſecond day after Dalton had been at Epſom, and Anna received the joyful ſummons, on the morning of that pleaſing one on which ſhe was required to be in town.

The old farmer and his daughter would accompany her in his one-horſe chaiſe; and Mrs. Dalton, whoſe curioſity was greatly raiſed by her huſband's deſcription of Anna, with her own, and Mrs. Bowen's daughter, met them at the inn, where they ſupped, and ſpent the evening together

gether in the greateſt harmony, as the farmer inſiſted on bearing all the expence.

Mrs. Dalton parted with our heroine with many kind expreſſions, and invited her return when weary of Wales.—Our travellers reached the place of their deſtination without any one incident worth relating.

Mrs. Bowen found her ſon waiting for her with a ſingle horſe, and borrowing a pillion at the inn, mounted Anna behind him—As this was the firſt time ſhe had ever been on horſeback, her fears obliged her to go a very ſlow pace; ſo that although they left Brecknock, and had but ten Welch miles, which is not above eighteen Engliſh, to go, it appeared the longeſt journey ſhe had ever taken; and the craggy narrow roads, ſometimes aſcending nearly perpendicular, at others frightening her with their ſudden declivity, and the almoſt barren mountains, which bore no traits of inhabitants, except the numerous flocks of ſheep, con-

tributed not a little to the tediouſneſs of the journey; more eſpecially as her conductor underſtood not her language—It was eleven o'clock, and the darkneſs of the night, which was likewiſe wet, had for the laſt two or three hours taken from her the power of diſtinguiſhing objects, when to her inexpreſſible joy, they reached Llandore.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXI.

A worthy Parſon and a Welch Village.

MR. Manſel's family were retired to reſt; he was in his ſtudy himſelf, it being Saturday night; and his wife, uſed to later hours than was known in that peaceful part of the globe, where all had been ſilent above an hour, was undreſſing in her own apartment, when a loud holla at the door, where no thundering rap was ever heard, alarmed her; ſhe opened her unbarred window and aſked who called; but to deſcribe the joyful extacies the good woman felt on hearing a well-known and beloved voice anſwer, "It "is me, it is Anna;" is impoſſible; the doors flew open, the heart and arms of Mrs. Manſel expanded to receive their welcome gueſt; and, then, for the firſt time ſince their ſeparation, did Anna feel quite happy; ſhe was now, ſhe thought, at home; the rugged paths that had led

to the bleſſed haven of friendſhip were forgotten; no place could be barren or uncultivated where philanthropy lived, and where benevolence thrived.

When Mrs. Manſel ſhewed her to the little apartment they had allotted her, contiguous to their own, ſhe took poſſeſſion of it with the ſame heart-felt eaſe and pleaſure, as if the moſt indulgent mother had given it her; a ſound and refreſhing ſleep, unalloyed by care of any kind, ſucceeded the fatiguing journey, from which ſhe did not awake till noon next day.

The good woman and her ſon, who Mrs. Manſel obliged to ſtay the night, had been gone hours before Anna was ſenſible of the happineſs that awaited her; the embrowned mountain tops, the diſagreeable and almoſt unfrequented roads ſhe had paſſed, were yet in her mind, and Mrs. Manſel's woodbines and jeſſamines ſhe ſet down as mere figures in rhetoric. Impreſſed with thoſe ideas when ſhe advanced to her window, and feaſted her

eyes

eyes with a ſight of the moſt beautiful valley nature ever formed, with not only the creepers Mrs. Manſel deſcribed, but a moſs roſe tree, and a myrtle actually growing into her room, ſhe could ſcarce credit her ſenſes, or believe ſhe was not in fairy land.

The ſituation of the village of Llandore is beautifully pictureſque and romantic; it ſtands in a fertile valley, through which runs the river Tave, whoſe frequent, but harmleſs overflowings, give a richneſs and verdure more captivating to the eye, from the wild mountains which form, to appearance, an inacceſſible chain on each ſide of the vale, irregularly interſperſed with various old ruins, the ſad memento of the faded glory and ſunken dignity of the ancient inhabitants of Cambria. In the middle of a large green church-yard, ſtood the church, and round it, in two ſemicircles, on the outſide of the wall, were the white-waſhed neat dwellings of the inhabitants, with here and there a break for a better houſe than common, ſuch

ſuch as the parſonage, the doctor's, lawyer's, exciſeman's, and preſbyterian parſon's. The river was ſo divided above the village for the conveniency of working two mills at the other extremity, that a ſtream of clear water ran on each ſide at the back of the houſes, and joined a mile farther; the green of their little orchards and gardens were beautifully contraſted by the ſnow-white appearance of the walls which ſurrounded them. Lime was ſo very cheap, and cleanlineſs in ſuch high eſtimation at Llandore, that the meaneſt hut vied in hue with the beſt houſe there, which was the parſonage.

This was a comfortable dwelling, where neatneſs and convenience was ſo judiciouſly blended, it would be difficult, and, perhaps, impoſſible to alter any part of it, without injury to one or the other of them; a flower garden reached from the front almoſt to the veſtry door; at the back of it was a hanging kitchen garden and orchard, the trees ſo regularly planted, that from all the windows, the river which ran at the bottom,

bottom, and the hill on the other ſide, were ſeen to the moſt charming advantage. The living was worth ſixty pounds a year; Mr. Manſel had a few acres of ground to his houſe, and he rented a few more, juſt enough to ſupply his family.

Mrs. Manſel I have already deſcribed; her huſband's character may be told in a few words: he was a man of liberal education; the chearful practiſer of thoſe divine and moral laws which he equally enforced by precept and example; he bore himſelf, every part of his ſacred function, with the honour of his maſter in view; he preached a plain, ſound doctrine, that all might underſtand, and all, if they pleaſed, put in practice.

In the duties of religion he knew no diſtinction of perſons; in private life he was reſpectful, not ſervile to his ſuperiors, but affable and mild to his inferiors; in his converſation he was at once ſimple, elegant and polite, though ſtrict in his own morals, he knew how to pity frailties

ties in others; religion was in him chearful and reſpectable.

He never failed ſolemnly to admoniſh his flock in caſes of vicious exceſs; but in the innocent diverſions of the country, he was one of the firſt; the ſong, the dance, or Chriſt mas gambol, was incompleat without the good rector.

He was firmly attached to his wife, having the higheſt opinion both of her heart and underſtanding, and was always in moſt credit with himſelf, when he anticipated her ſentiments; he was the Iſraelite in whom there was no guile; and he had this very particular happineſs, he was a perſon of whom every body ſpoke well.

On the oppoſite ſide, fronting the parſonage, but nearer the ſummit of the mountain, at the diſtance of one mile, diſtinguiſhed by the numerous white chimnies which appeared to riſe out of the very thick grove that ſurrounded it, was Llandore Caſtle, an ancient family manſion belonging to Sir William Edwin, but now inhabited by Mr. Herbert, who having married

married the favourite ſiſter of that Baronet, was complimented by him with this place on account of its vicinity to ſome large iron works of which Mr. Herbert was, in right of his wife, a principal proprietor.

The view of this ancient building, which had been for ages dignified with the name of caſtle, and the grandeur as well as the beauty of the ſurrounding woods, reaching from the front down to the edge of the river, over which a regular row of white large ſtones formed a convenient cauſeway; and from the back up to the top of the mountain, was an enchanting addition to the pleaſant proſpect from the parſonage; when our heroine had time to look round her, there was an air of content and freedom in the inhabitants, a cleanlineſs in the look of their houſes that charmed her, and the reſpect and veneration which the pariſhioners bore their rector, was extended to every part of his family. Mrs. Manſel, notwithſtanding ſhe was unacquainted with their

language

language was ſoon endeared to them on her own account. "I am not," ſaid ſhe to Anna, (when, in ſhewing her every part of the houſe, they came to a little cloſet filled with medicines of all kinds) "ambitious of "the character of a Lady Bountiful, but "the poor people are here in general ſo "ignorant, they frighten themſelves at the "idea of a doctor, as well on the account "of the expence, as the notion, that "when the doctor is called in, death is "not far diſtant; ſo that trifling medi-"cines and dreſſings are acquiſitions to "them, and of little expence to me; and "you will not ſuſpect me of carrying my "charity ſo far as to look at their wounds "when they have them, or expoſing my "own health to the danger of infection: "I am content with the theory, though I "can tell you I am in general ſo ſucceſs-"ful in my preſcriptions, that my fame "is very much known, and my ſkill as "much depended on; but I am particu-"larly now, when to every other bleſſing "is added the company of my beloved

"Anna,

" Anna, too ſenſible of my happineſs, to " riſk, by any wilful act of my own, a " change. Too good to me, and too " indulgent to all my hopes, the Al- " mighty diſpoſer of my fate rendered " me thankful to heaven—I muſt now " expect ſome trials."

Such were Mrs. Manſel's ſentiments, and ſuch her conſtant practice; her open hand, her giving heart, never retreated from the cries of diſtreſs; her charities were extended with liberality and feeling, yet they were governed by prudence; the infant and aged poor were moſt the objects of her regard; and by her proper management, and having nouriſhing things made at her own houſe, ſhe contrived to compaſs every benevolent purpoſe at a trifling expence.

Formed under *her* eye, taught by *her* example, and impreſſed with *her* ideas, the heart of her pupil ever beat in uniſon with her own; Anna became the chearful diſpenſer of charity; her youth and vivacity made the learning the Welch langnage

eaſy

eaſy and uſeful; ſhe ſoon became the interpreter of the poor to her maternal friend, and their intervals of time was filled by work, reading, or muſic, as in the happy days of Melmoth Lodge; nor where they entirely deprived of the pleaſures of ſociety, for the lawyer's lady, as well as thoſe of the diſſenting teacher, the doctor, and the exciſeman, though too rude and uncultivated to give or receive, that delicate pleaſure ariſing from the intercourſe of refined ſentiments and polite manners, yet ſpoke Engliſh, and, with a few ſubſtantial freeholders, were never weary of teſtifying their reſpect, and love for the rector and his family, nor ever ſo happy as when they had the pleaſure of entertaining them, on thoſe occaſions the young people of the better ſort were invited to join Anna, and a dance generally concluded the evening, in which the rector frequently joined.

The protection and kindneſs of Mrs. Manſel was not more ſalutary to our heroine, than comfortable to herſelf; ſhe had indeed, whenever Mr. Manſel was called

called from home, found herſelf in a terrible ſolitude; but ſhe had now a tenderly beloved companion with whom ſhe could moſt delightfully converſe, whoſe taſte and ſentiments exactly correſponded with her own whoſe lively diſpoſition, untainted with levity, diverted and amuſed, while the goodneſs of her heart, and the ſweetneſs of her temper, endeared her not only to her, but to the whole village.

Mrs. Manſel had, from the favours of different families in which ſhe had lived, a large ſtock of all kind of cloaths; ſhe was happy now to put them to uſe, and applied herſelf to the transforming them for her dear Anna, whoſe gratitude and pleaſure, if we conſider the effect new things have on young minds, may be ſuppoſed very great; but allowing for youth and pride all we may her ſatisfaction at receiving, was not nearly equal to that her friends felt in giving, conſtant proofs of unbounded affection.

When Mrs. Manſel had finiſhed equiping her, ſhe prepared her for the acquaint-

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ance of *one* lady, who, in that remote ſpot, ſhe ſaid, would do honour to a court; and having ſent in the morning for permiſſion, ſhe took our heroine, after dinner, to viſit Mrs. Herbert at Llandore Caſtle; in their way thither, the hiſtory of the family they were going to viſit engroſſed their converſation.

Mr. Herbert was a gentleman who could trace his pedigree nearly as long as his lady, which is ſaying a great deal; he married her in her nineteenth year, when in the bloom of beauty; ſhe was the toaſt of the country.

Mr. Herbert was a jolly, handſome man, and at that time ſuppoſed to be ſo diſtractedly in love with Miſs Martha Erwin, that if ſhe had not conſented to be united to him, he would have deſtroyed himſelf; he had a clear eſtate of two thouſand pounds a year, his lady's fortune was five thouſand pounds; but the iron works, left her by her grandmothet, was a great addition to that ſum, and Sir William

liam Edwin, her brother, gave them up the caſtle for their country reſidence.

Mr. Herbert hated London; they therefore ſpent their winters at Bath, where they had an elegant houſe.

In the firſt years of their marriage, they were bleſſed with ſeveral children, two only of whom were now living, a ſon, in his twenty firſt year, compleating his ſtudies at Oxford, being deſigned for the bar, and a daughter of ſeventeen.

Mrs. Herbert was not ſo happy in her domeſtic circle as ſhe deſerved to be; her huſband, from the moſt conſtant and paſſionate lover, and for a few years the kindeſt of huſbands, thought proper to be weary of happineſs.

His home grew inſipid; his children, whose prattle was once his ſupreme delight, were now noiſy; and his wife, whoſe ſoul and body was the aſſemblage of goodneſs and beauty, tired him with her ſameneſs and inſipidity.

Seduced by the falſe appearances of pleaſure in the diſſipated company he kept at

at Bath, at a period when prudent men give up their follies, his commenced, and his amiable, ſenſible wife, had the anguiſh of ſeeing herſelf deſerted for, and inſulted by, almoſt every demirip who frequented the ſeat of gaiety; but thoſe indulgencies coſt him very dear. They impaired his conſtitution, and embarraſſed his circumſtances; air became neceſſary for one, but he wanted reſolution to apply himſelf to the œconomy of the other.

He retired to Llandore, but for a time, vitiated habits are not to be conquered merely by a ſecluſion from company; from an intriguer in high life, Mr. Herbert condeſcended to become a ſeducer of innocence in low, the maids at the caſtle, in their turns, triumphed over their injured miſtreſs; ſometimes, indeed, the truant would return to a ſenſe of duty, and, promiſe of amendment, but as thoſe fits of penitence were ſure to be ſucceeded by longer and more atrocious lapſes; they in time ceaſed to be the object of his lady's wiſhes; and at laſt, after having been

been long miſerable, rendered her reſentful, ſhe, on his removing a maid (who waited on Miſs Herbert) publicly from her ſervice into elegant lodgings, left his bed.

Mr. Herbert was too full of his new amour, to pay any regard to this act of his wife; and his miſtreſs being artful, handſome, and extravagant, retained her influence over him, to the entire ruin both of his peace and his fortune; and ſo much was he wrapped up in this woman, he could not bear an abſence of any length. At this period of my hiſtory, he kept her in a hired houſe only ſix miles from the caſtle, where he conſtantly viſited her, regardleſs of the ill-requited love, and mortified pride, of one of the moſt amiable women, whoſe fine ſenſe, and elegant perſon, were deſpiſed and neglected; yet conſcious worth and injured innocence inſpired her with fortitude, and gave a dignity to her ſufferings, that intereſted every heart but of him whom it moſt concerned.

buſineſs called Mr. Herbert to ., Nichols only accompanied him; but Mrs. and Miſs Herbert were of his party to Bath, where they ſpent ſix months out of the twelve.

Mrs. Herbert thus forced to ſeek in the reſources of her own mind a conſolation denied her in the tenderneſs of her huſband, transferred her affection to her children; ſhe adored her ſon, and doated on her daughter.

Miſs Herbert was a lovely girl, whoſe pleaſing form was animated by a ſoul replete with every ſentiment of generoſity, gentleneſs, and good nature; ſhe ſaw with unutterable ſorrow the affliction of her worthy mother, whom ſhe loved with an enthuſiaſtic fondneſs: it was the ſtudy of her life to blunt the keen edge of her parent's woe by every act of duty and unremitting attention; her temper was mild, forgiving; ſhe had the innocence of the dove, without an atom of gall in her compoſition.

CHAPTER XXII.

Viſits and Family Pictures.

TO ladies of the turn I have deſcribed thoſe of Llandore Caſtle, it may be imagined the ſettlement of a ſenſible, well-bred woman, in the neighbourhood, was an acquiſition. Mrs. Herbert, long ſick of the unmeaning acquaintance with which the world abounds, received with pleaſure to her friendſhip and confidence, the worthy Mrs. Manſel, nor was Mr. Manſel leſs a favourite with Mr. Herbert, who would not dine on Sunday without his benediction, charging him, however, to keep clear of his preachments, a hint Mr. Manſel had too much real piety always to obſerve, though he had the ſorrow to ſee all arguments were ineffectual, and remonſtrance unattended to by a man ſo vitiated, that

he was above the diſguiſe of a decent appearance; indeed ſo abhorrent to his principles was the life of Mr. Herbert, that nothing but the reſpect and compaſſion he felt for the lady, would have prevailed on him to appear at their table.

Mrs. Manſel was now doubly welcome at Llandore on account of her young companion; ſhe was introduced as a near relation of Mr. Manſel's, whoſe name, at their requeſt, ſhe went by; for as ſhe had no natural right to that of Dalton, and as her aſſuming it was rather an act of neceſſity than choice, ſhe readily changed it, not, however, till Mr. Dalton had given his permiſſion, which was aſked by Mrs. Manſel by letter.

There was on a viſit at this time to Miſs Herbert, a daughter of Sir William Edwin, Miſs Cecilia Edwin, who was not immediately quite ſo gracious as her couſin with our heroine; but time ſo improved their acquaintance into mutual liking and regard, the young ladies and Anna became inſeparable; and when a

ſhort

ſhort time after Miſs Edwin left Llandore, and Anna by that means was Miſs Herbert's only companion, her accompliſhments rendered her ſociety as improving as it was pleaſing, and the graces both of her mind and perſon, endeared her to Mrs. Herbert, as well as her daughter. The ſummer paſſed imperceptibly, in one continued ſcene of tranquil happineſs, which was a little interrupted in November, by the regret Anna felt at parting with her new friends, who at that time left Llandore. But though the refined pleaſures of agreeable and polite converſation were, for the preſent, confined to the parſonage, the convivial feſtival of Chriſtmas was not paſſed without its enjoyments; they paid and received the viſits of hoſpitality, and the inhabitants of the village made up in friendſhip, good humour, and a deſire to pleaſe, what they wanted in politeneſs, if, indeed, a ſincere wiſh to render every kind office to thoſe with whom we aſſociate is not politeneſs in its trueſt ſenſe. At other times, when the bleak winds and

deep ſnows, or more uncomfortable cold rains, made every trifling excurſion fatiguing and dangerous from the warm cheary dwelling ſhe was bid to call her own, ſtill the hours were marked with freſh enjoyments; reading, working, and drawing, were changed with muſic; Mr. Manſel's flute often accompanied the ſweet pipe of our heroine; their days were thoſe of peace and happineſs; their nights bleſſed with reſt and tranquility.

Summer returned the valuable inhabitants of Llandore; the ſix months that had elapſed, had not been more favourable to the improvements of Anna's perſon than her mind; her avidity after learning increaſed with her opportunities; and Mrs. Herbert was too ſenſible of the benefit her daughter muſt receive from ſuch a companion, not to detain her, as often as poſſible, at the caſtle. In the courſe of the ſummer, Miſs Herbert was ſtrongly preſſed to go to Dennis Place, and take Miſs Manſel with her. Miſs Edwin aſſured her, her couſin, Lady Edwin was prepared to love

and

and admire her friend, and that ſhe would be highly offended with both if they did not accept her invitation. The rector and his lady were equally loth to part with their niece, as Anna was called; nor was Mrs. Herbert willing to be ſeparated from her daughter, but yet ſhe was more loth to diſoblige Cecilia, whoſe repeated intreaties at laſt prevailed on her, and her's on the Manſels, to let the young ladies go, Mrs. Manſel agreeing to ſpend the time they were gone wholly with Mrs. Herbert at Llandore. With many injunctions to take care of themſelves, and as many to write often. Miſs Herbert and our heroine were ſent off in the chariot attended by one ſervant, and reached Dennis Place by their dinner hour, which was ſix o'clock; they were received with open arms by Cecilia, and with great politeneſs by the reſt of the family, which conſiſted of Sir William, Lady Edwin, and Miſs Winifred Edwin, a maiden ſiſter of the Baronet. The ſon and heir of Dennis Place was then on his travels; the

open-hearted hoſpitality that regained in this ſpacious manſion, where the order, regularity, and cleanlineſs, could only be equalled by the plenty and liberality which was extended to all corners, was a ſcene perfectly new to Anna. The maſſy old plate, the large ſtud of fine horſes, number of ſervants, with the magnificence of the furniture, and the elegance of their table, gave her ideas of opulence and grandeur, to which ſhe was hitherto a ſtranger, and impreſſed on her mind a reſpect and wonder which every hour increaſed.

They were ſhewn to ſeperate apartments, and had each an attendant conſigned to them; a groom was likewiſe ordered to wait their commands with horſes, whenever they choſe to ride, and they had not been half an hour in the houſe before they found themſelves perfectly at home.

When they retired, Miſs Herbert aſked her companion how ſhe liked Dennis-Place? it was impoſſible to diſlike what exceeded all that *ſhe* had conceived of elegance and grandeur; "If," ſaid Miſs Herbert, "you

"are

" are not ſleepy, I will give you ſome " anecdotes of this family, which will ac- " count for the ſuperiority of their ap- " pearance over my mamma."

This was very good, Anna told her, and ſhe would venture to promiſe attention, if her obliging communication laſted the night; it was, indeed, gratifying a curioſity which aroſe in her mind the moment ſhe ſaw the very great difference of circumſtances in the brother and ſiſter.

" It is not," ſaid Miſs Herbert, " that " my mamma's firſt ſetting out in life, was " inferior to her fortune or family, but " my uncle's, which was ſo ſuperior, that " occaſioned the immenſe diſtance between " them in point of circumſtances: Lady " Cecilia Edwin was one of the greateſt " fortunes in the principality; ſhe fell in " love with my uncle at Worceſter muſic " meeting. The old Earl, her father, " having been very unfortunate in her " twin brother, gave his ſanction to her " choice, as ſoon as he found my uncle's " was the beſt blood in our country, as

" his was in his own; and at his death,
" his great eſtate, as well as immenſe
" perſonals, centered in Lady Edwin and
" her family. My couſin, Hugh, is as
" handſome as his father, but I am afraid
" not quite ſo good; he is a year older
" than my brother Charles; Cecilia, you
" know, ſhe is a very amiable girl, and de-
" ſerves the riches ſhe is entitled to; mam-
" ma ſays, Lady Edwin is a noble ſpirited
" woman; ſhe is certainly very good;
" but I know not how it is, I always feel
" more inclined to fear than love her; I
" hope it is not a breach of the duty I
" owe my father, but I actually believe I
" love my uncle better than I do him:
" if you knew how kind he is to my
" mamma, you would not wonder at my
" attachment—Never, indeed, in that re-
" ſpect was a happier woman; both Sir
" William and Lady Edwin make her in-
" tereſt theirs; and notwithſtanding papa's
" imprudence, they certainly intended Ceci-
" lia for my brother, but that is a ſecret:
" indeed Lady Edwin is (lowering her

" mild voice to a whiſper) as family mad
" as her father was; ſhe would almoſt
" expire at the thought of either of her
" children's marrying into one, whoſe pe-
" digree did not reach as far as from
" hence to Llandore."

Anna could not help laughing at this innocent ſally in her friend, who added, " yet mamma ſays, the fineſt young man " in the world was loſt by this nonſenſe:" After ſome remarks on the hiſtory ſhe had communicated, they ſeparated, as Miſs Herbert lay with Cecilia—When they met in the morning, the ſtately air of Lady Cecilia, the ſenſe of her high rank, and the value ſhe ſet on good blood, in all which, Anna knew herſelf to be very deficient, gave her preciſely Patty Herbert's ideas: ſhe felt much more inclined to fear than to love a perſon who appeared to carry nothing about her in common with the reſt of the world but her form, and that, graceful as it was, rather overawed than pleaſed—A ſilent, formal breakfaſt gave place to an unintereſting con-

verſation between Lady Cecilia and the maiden Mrs. Winifred, on a perſon of the name of Trevannion (who pretended to be a diſtant relation to her ladyſhip's family) and having fallen into misfortunes, ſolicited relief—the roll was fetched, and the man (who was an artful beggar) examined; the account he gave was ſo lame, and as he was far from ſpeaking the language of the country, he was on the point of being conſigned to the diſcipline of the ſervants, when Lady Cecilia recollecting herſelf, ſolemnly aſked if his name was really Trevannion? The man aſſuring her, trembling, it was—Well, then, ſaid ſhe, majeſtically turning from him, let him go; let his name be his protection—this affair, which had been examined and treated with great ſolemnity, ended—the young ladies withdrew to laugh over the prejudices of high blood, and Lady Edwin retired to her chamber, attended by Miſs Winifred with the pedigree.

Lady

Lady Cecilia Edwin is by this time, I am afraid, no favourite of my reader; I muſt therefore, in juſtice to her, enlarge on a character, not, I confeſs, introduced in the moſt amiable colours, but which had ſo many bright lines to ſet off this one dark ſhade, that I am at a loſs with which to begin.

Lady Cecilia Edwin was, as Miſs Herbert informed Anna, the only daughter of the Earl of Trevannion, a nobleman ſo ſtrictly attached to his country, that he never but once in his life left it, to viſit the court of London, and that was on the marriage of the then Prince of Wales—He was deſcended in a regular line from Llewellin, Prince of South Wales, and every marriage and intermarriage in his line of anceſtry, were among the deſcendants of ſome or other of the ancient Cambrian heroes—This family pride deſcended to his daughter; but it was not the only thing ſhe derived from her father; a firm undaunted mind, which ſhrunk not from its own ſorrows, while it diffuſed con-

conſolation and relief to thoſe of other people; a benevolent ſpirit; a ſoul that ſcorned an act of meanneſs; a princely rewarder of merit; a general benefactor to the needy; diſintereſted and generous; all thoſe was the Earl of Trevannion, and all theſe was his daughter—A deviation from the pride of anceſtry in his ſon, had totally alienated his affections; but in the diſpoſition of his fortune, he did not ſuffer himſelf to be prejudiced by his anger; had Lord Trevannion lived, though baniſhed from his father's love, he would have experienced his juſtice.

Sir William Edwin, ſo happily diſtinguiſhed by the noble heireſs, was of ancient, and nearly as honourable a family as the Trevannions; riches were traſh, acres dirt, to that one conſideration—it gave him the advadtage of Dukes, who were ſuiters to Lady Cecilia, in the eyes of both father and daughter; in thoſe of the latter, a very fine perſon, was, perhaps, no ſmall addition to the reſpect due to his genealogy.

Lady

Lady Edwin was ſo tenacious of her family dignity, of which ſhe conſidered herſelf the only ſupport till her ſon was eſtabliſhed in the world; that the value ſhe ſet on her high birth, appeared to thoſe who did not perfectly know her, to ſavour not a little of vanity and oſtentation; and her charities, which were univerſal, ſeemed more the reſult of pride than that bleſſed ſpirit which taught her to feel for the wretched, who never applied to her in vain—grief and affliction from whatever country it came, found in her the ſource of comfort and relief; but in other matters, her ſervants, her tradeſmen, even her cattle muſt be Welch; nay, ſo attached was ſhe to the Cambrian ſtream in her veins, ſhe would, as ſhe often declared, rather have choſen to marry her children to the peaſant of her own wild hills, than to nobles of any other country—on this principle it was, that ſhe conſented to give her daughter to Charles Herbert; and on this principle Sir William and herſelf had contracted their ſon

to

to an only daughter of their next neighbour, though Miſs Tourbville had indeed other attractions, being an heireſs in her own right to twelve hundred a year, and great perſonals, her parents both dying before ſhe reached her teens—Her guardian, who lived in Dorſetſhire, knowing the intended alliance, placed this young lady, at her own requeſt, at the ſame ſchool with Miſs Edwin, between whom and her there exiſted great friendſhip and affection—To finiſh the character of Lady Edwin, I muſt add, ſhe was a fond wife and a good mother; very warm in her friendſhips, but vindictive in her reſentments, which were not eaſily excited on any other occaſion than an inſult offered to her family.

Sir William was, as I have ſaid, very handſome; he was perfectly good humoured and friendly in his diſpoſition; loved hunting above all things but his children; his bottle next; and ſorry I am to name her, after ſo many rivals, his lady laſt: indeed his paſſions were never greatly intereſted in her favour, nevertheleſs he re-

reſpected and ſhewed her the utmoſt attention on all occaſions, leaving to her management her eſtate as well as his own, calling on her for what money he choſe to expend; for, as ſhe had brought him ſuch a noble fortune, he thought it but juſt, ſhe ſhould diſpoſe of it as ſhe beſt liked—Her generoſity rewarded his confidence; his will was hers; and Mrs. Herbert's family ſhe conſidered as her own—Sir William was very fond of his ſiſter; he knew her huſband was imprudent by her frequent applications to him for money; but had no ſuſpicion it was for ſuch proſtituted purpoſes.

He was by inheritance from father to ſon, knight of the ſhire; and ſo well was he beloved, that his name carried the numbers for the town and county where Dennis Place ſtood—Though urged very much, he would not give up his ſeat for his own ſhire, many, very many, felt the philanthropy of his ſoul. Though no perſon living (the prime miniſter for the time

time being excepted,) ever found an enemy in Sir William Edwin, he was a conſtant railer at taxes; not becauſe he paid them, but becauſe his friends did; the country party was ſure of *him*.

While the tenants of every eſtate round him had their rents raiſed, his grew affluent at their old prices; hence gratitude induced thoſe who had leaſes, and intereſt thoſe who had not, to keep in perfect order and repair their ſeveral domains; their ſtock not being obliged to be parted with, at the requiſition of a needy or cruel landlord, were numerous and thriving, and the brow of contented, chearful induſtry, graced the door of every farm and cottage on their eſtate—Lady Edwin ſettled her ſteward's accounts weekly; no tradeſman or artificer were ſuffered to leave the houſe without prompt payment of their bills: their acts of benevolence were no leſs well-timed than general, though from the decent circumſtances every poor or labouring perſon muſt be

in

in who dwelt in the vicinity of ſuch a houſe, calls of charity were very few.

Miſs Winifred Edwin was, ſorely againſt her will, a maiden of forty; but though ſhe had found herſelf diſappointed, in a deep-laid matrimonial ſcheme, by the marriage of Mr. Manſel, who with great reſpect declined her offered hand, pleading his engagement, as his excuſe for not accepting ſo great an honour, was yet the beſt-tempered creature breathing; her ill ſucceſs, injuring neither her natural good humour, or putting her out of hopes of better luck another time: ſhe was, as indeed all the Edwins were, of a moſt friendly diſpoſition, and never ſo happy as when up to her ears in buſineſs; ſo that Miſs Winifred was employed, it mattered not in what.

She was the arranger of all the lovē quarrels in the houſe; the confidant of the maids, and on all occaſions of falſe hearts and broken vows, the terror of the men—She was ſole miſtreſs when Lady Cecilia

Cecilia was in town, and her right hand when in the country: as ſhe could tell off hand every blot on the anceſtry of all the old families in the principality, holding in infinite contempt, as upſtarts, thoſe who ſhe could trace their parentage no farther than three or four hundred years: and as to people who had purchaſed or accidentally ſettled in the neighbourhood, ſhe never recollected their names, or ſaw them, though ſhe was obliged to turn out of their way in the road. To oblige Lady Cecilia, ſhe at firſt made genealogy her ſtudy, and her proficiency as well as prejudices originating with that lady, it is no wonder, on a theme in which they both delighted, ſo much of their time was ſpent: the ſubject was as regularly ſerved up as the breakfaſt.

Miſs Cecilia Edwin was a fine, tall, brown girl, bred up at a capital boarding ſchool in London, where, as ſhe never knew what it was to form a wiſh for any thing money could purchaſe, without having it immediately gratified; the value of that article

article was the laſt thing ſhe could poſſibly learn.

She was very deep read in heroic novels; the governeſs, indeed, did not allow thoſe warm improvements in the minds of her young ladies, but as in the educating our females of rank, they much oftener meet with Madam Frajans than Mrs. Barlows, the teachers were not quite ſo nice; beſides, it was impoſſible to refuſe young ladies any indulgence who were continually making them preſents, which the two deſtined ſiſters always had it in their power to do.

The fine feelings and ſentiments, therefore, of thoſe heroines, who generally at the age of fifteen or ſixteen,

"All the turns of love's ſoft paſſion know."

and who preferred the gratification of that divine impulſe to any earthly thing were the favourite topics of Cecilia's converſation; and a journey to Scotland, with ſome dear unfortunate, her ambition. To keep her in credit with herſelf, it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould

ſhould be miſerable: her lively black eyes were taught to languiſh; her boſom to heave the gentle ſigh; the downcaſt look and ſoft melancholy were aſſumed, in direct contradiction to a ruddy animated complection, and a very fine flow of ſpirits; indeed, one difficulty, which it was cruel ſhe ſhould have to encounter was, that of not having yet been addreſſed at all: and how can a young noveliſt be wretched alone?—A partner muſt be found for the pleaſing miſery.

In the circle of her acquaintance ſhe knew of none half ſo amiable, ſo attentive, ſo accompliſhed, as her couſin Charles; and not having any ſuſpicion of her mother's intention to form a union between them (as the ſanction of her parents would have ſpoiled the whole matter) ſhe generouſly determined *he* ſhould be the hero of her adventures—In the correſpondence ſhe carried on in a ſeries of original letters, with a few of her ſweet young friends, ſhe was indeed particularly frank and communicative

municative, in her account of the riſe and progreſs of this amour; relating diſtreſs ſhe was a ſtranger to, circumſtances that never happened, and vows of love which exiſted only in her own heated imagination and profound reading.

Few young men viſited at Dennis Place but were ſet down by her as unhappy lovers; they were amiable; ſhe could approve them as friends; but, alas! her heart was bound to one dear object, in bonds, which nothing but death could diſſolve.

Our heroine was ſoon one of the confidants of Cecilia; and Miſs Herbert not having had ſo liberal an education, could not poſſibly conceive a paſſion ſo well expreſſed could be imaginary—She believed her brother tenderly beloved by Cecilia, but had ſometimes a ſecret doubt, whether ſhe did not rather flatter her own wiſhes in her ideas of his return—He was to ſpend the vacation there, and ſhe reſolved to be a cloſe obſerver; though a deli-

delicate regard for the pride of her couſin, forbid her dropping a hint of thoſe doubts even to Anna, who, on her part, concluded Mr. Charles Herbert and Cecilia Edwin to be a very faithful pair of lovers.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.